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QUAKERISM AND INDUSTRY BEFORE 1800

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

QUAKERS IN IRELAND

J. ERNEST GRUBB OF CARRICK-ON-SUIR

QUAKERISM AND INDUSTRY BEFORE 1800

By

ISABEL GRUBB, M.A.

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PREFACE

WHAT is the correct attitude of the Church towards social and economic problems? Opinions vary between those who think that religious organizations have nothing to do with such matters, and those who act as though the whole duty of a Christian is to improve mental and material conditions; between these widely differing points of view many varieties of opinion are held. In his book *Religion and Capitalism* Mr. Tawney has shown that both extremes have been known before. The pre-Reformation Church thought all departments of life within its purview; but, as a consequence of the greater freedom for religious thought and action that came during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and of the great change in industry itself, the mass of religious opinion in England in the eighteenth century disassociated commerce and industry from the sphere of the Church's control. The one conspicuous exception to this latter point of view was that of the Quakers, and it is my purpose to give some account of the way in which Quakerism before 1800 made itself felt in economic life in England and Ireland.

This book is not an attempt to relate the industrial history of individual Quakers. There have already been written a number of accounts of various Quaker firms; of the Darbys and iron, Weres and Foxes and wool, Tukes and tea, Bevans and Hanburys and pharmacy, Cookworthy and china, Lloyds, Gurneys, Barclays, etc., and banking. To all these records I am indebted for information, but such books are not primarily concerned with the effect of Quaker principles on Quaker practice. From the writings of individuals, as well as from the official documents of the Society, much information has been obtained on

Quaker business ethics and their practical application to industrial pursuits.

The first chapter is introductory, whilst the next three deal with the social and economic theories held by Quaker writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The influence exercised by the Society on the trading activities of its members is next considered, and also the restrictive and constructive effects of their religious principles on the lives of individual Quakers. Finally, an estimate is made of the character of the eighteenth-century Quaker as a business man.

I have tried to give facts about the relation between Quakerism and industry before 1800, but have not attempted to show the application of these facts to present-day problems.

The work is in part the result of a Research Fellowship kindly granted to me by the Woodbrooke Council, and I am indebted to my cousin Edward Grubb, M.A., and to H. G. Wood, M.A., for their valued criticisms before the book reached its final form.

October 1929 ISABEL GRUBB

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QUAKERISM AND INDUSTRY BEFORE 1800

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

IN the Middle Ages there was no such cleavage between the religious, political, and economic factors in a man's daily life as there is apt to be at the present day. The Church and its regulations had more visible control over the pursuits of the ordinary individual than had either King or Emperor. The medieval craftsman definitely associated his guild with a particular church or saint, and he considered it part of his religious observance that he should be charitable to his poorer neighbours and lend them money if in need.

The parish was the unit of social and economic as well as of religious life. When the Protestant Reformation came it did not at first alter this. The earliest Reformers discussed economic problems as part of their views on morality and ethics, just as the Schoolmen had done in the Middle Ages. Luther, whilst inveighing against its organization, did not suggest that the Church was in any way divorced from economic life, yet his fundamental thought that all men are on a basis of equality towards God implied much more than he himself knew. He considered that if men truly let the grace of God work in their hearts they would do right to their fellows, and that the guidance of the Bible and their own consciences would suffice without any elaborate system of ethics laid down by the

Church; so he did not define the relation between the religious life of the individual and his social activities. The growing power of commerce and finance was not realized by him, and he was as conservative as his predecessors in thinking that reform lay in a return to a simpler state of society.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were periods of religious upheaval, but were also times of change in the social and economic spheres; this was due partly to the discoveries which led to the shifting of the centre of commercial and industrial life from the Baltic and the Mediterranean countries to those facing the Atlantic, and partly to the growth of big-scale finance. Calvin, unlike Luther, accepted these changing conditions. Instead, too, of leaving each person to the guidance of the Bible and of his own conscience, he believed that the Church should, by its discipline, control its members so that their lives and deeds might be to the glory of God in the world. Good works were not a means of salvation, according to him, but were its necessary fruits. The social implications of Christianity were certainly present in his teaching and practice. Not even the Medieval Church itself at the height of its power had such a grip on the daily lives of men as Calvin tried to gain for his church organization at Geneva; yet he insisted on personal responsibility, and his followers tended to look upon poverty as more of a crime than a misfortune, whilst business enterprise and hard work were regarded as channels through which the Christian virtues might be attained.

The Church of England for a time continued the medieval policy and exercised some oversight of social and economic life, but neither its practical men nor its theorists understood that the great changes which were taking place necessitated restating the old ideas in a new form. Archbishop Laud advocated as strongly as any medieval churchman the unity of life; but just as he was the last great English churchman to

take a prominent part in the Government, so he was the last primate of the Church of England who tried to bring economic matters under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts. After the Restoration the Church of England left the regulation of trade and industry to the State.

Where Calvinism was predominant, as in Geneva, it endeavoured to form a wholly Christian society by means of a stringent discipline, but where it was in the minority, it tended to assist the growth of economic individualism. The Presbyterians and the Baptists did exercise some disciplinary supervision over the social activities of their members, but as the years went on this feature became of less account in most of the sects.[1]

The growth of Nonconformity, a characteristic of the religious movement in England in the seventeenth century, is in itself an indication that men no longer thought the spheres of State and Church conterminous as the Tudor sovereigns had insisted. It was natural that Independents and Baptists who wished for liberty to worship without State interference should also wish for liberty to trade as their consciences permitted them. They could not tolerate regulation by any religious organization with whose doctrines they did not agree, yet the period of the Protectorate saw in the famous "Barebones" Parliament a short-lived attempt to establish in England a form of government somewhat like that of Calvin's Church State at Geneva. After the Restoration the nonconforming sects were so much occupied in their efforts to exist in face of persecution that the fight for economic liberty was merged into that for religious toleration. When this had been obtained, the leading merchants and industrialists (in which classes Puritanism was always strong) were able to

[1] See *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, R. H. Tawney, Murray, 1926, p. 214, and also *The Records of a Church of Christ meeting in Broadmead, Bristol*, 1640–1687, London, 1847, pp. 368, 379, etc.

influence Parliament to control economic affairs as far as they wanted it to be done. The country as a whole by the eighteenth century accepted State rather than Church regulation in matters of trade and industry.

One important element in Puritan belief strengthened the separation between religious and business life. The creed which could find nothing good in man as man, or in his connection with the world of matter, found its complement in the idea that the things of the world were not of the same order as the things of the spirit, and that although the individual should strive to live a good life and to make his character such as would be to the glory of God, salvation came only through the grace of God. It was indeed a tragedy that, in the latter part of the seventeenth century and in most of the eighteenth, the greater part of those in England who cared for religion should have failed to realize their corporate social responsibility; for this was a period of momentous change in the industrial system.

The Society of Friends held more strongly than Luther the idea that all men are equal in the sight of God, but did not leave matters of conduct wholly to the individual conscience. The Quaker was not at heart an individualist: the Spirit which guided him also guided other men and women, and as the Spirit of Truth could not contradict itself he believed that there was a common outlook for those who had come to know the truth. God revealed Himself to individuals and to groups met in silence to wait on Him, and His Holy Spirit would lead them to know the right course to follow in all the circumstances of life. Religion was in no way separated from daily activities, but was lived out through them. In the joyous fellowship of believers which the early Friends experienced, love of the brethren was a natural outcome of the following of the Inner Light, and all things being subordinate to truth,

no material consideration should lead a man to act contrary to it. Thus it was they emphasized social and corporate responsibilities.

In the eighteenth century various influences tended to make them accept, without realizing their inconsistency, the Puritan division between the world of nature and that of the Spirit. Yet their reliance on the guidance of the Spirit and their active desire for the right conduct of all associated with their community made them even more anxious than before that truth should not suffer through the unseemly conduct of any who professed to be guided by the Spirit. At the time when other Churches were as organizations concerning themselves but little with the social and economic activities of their members, the Quakers, believing that religion should permeate every sphere of life, were in their corporate capacity insisting on a high standard of social righteousness among their members. As their method of Church government was essentially democratic, the community itself and no paid persons from a separate class exercised jurisdiction; it consisted of men and women who were mostly engaged in commerce, trade, industry, or agriculture, hence their practical bent made them inclined rather to attempt to remedy existing defects than to outline a theoretically perfect form of society.

It is difficult for us now to realize what the social and industrial system in England was in the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1650 English industries were still based largely on the household and guild systems, though the power of the guilds themselves had waned considerably. Most of the industries were carried on in rural districts by men who were part artisans and part farmers. Few roads were in sufficiently good repair for vehicular traffic, and transport by packhorse was so cumbersome that parishes were as far as possible self-supporting. The Act of Settlement (1662) made it difficult for

workers to move from one place to another to find work, although in 1700 there was probably still enough work for all.

Outside the towns, shops as we know them were practically non-existent, but the chapmen travelled from village to village supplying the little luxuries, etc., which could not be obtained locally. In the North of England, where the woollen trade was beginning to be organized on a capitalistic basis, the clothiers went their rounds on horseback to collect cloth from the weavers for the dyeing and finishing processes which were already being concentrated in the towns. In the eastern and south-western industrial areas the master-weavers of towns like Norwich and Plymouth supplied wool on credit to the spinners and received back the yarn which was made up into cloth in their weaving-sheds.

A few companies had the control of the mines, for the working of which more capital was needed than in other industries, except for some branches of metal-working. During the seventeenth century the iron trade was languishing in England; for, in spite of efforts to maintain the supply of timber in the country and of the imports from Ireland which denuded her of her forests, the sources for charcoal were diminishing. Attempts made to smelt iron with coal were not commercially successful until later.

The increased interest in science and the application of it to industry were also characteristic of the period between 1660 and 1800. The growth of available capital, in great part due to the ascetic tendencies of the Puritan masters of industry, provided the means of carrying out experiments which led to important discoveries. In the iron industry the Darbys discovered how to use coal instead of charcoal first for smelting iron-ore and then for making bar iron. The first Abraham Darby also improved the methods of producing cast iron. When iron goods could thus be made more readily the

improvements in the "fire-engine" by Newcomen and later by Watt led to a still more rapid production of machinery to take the place of manual labour. But the eighteenth century was nearly over before these changes affected most manufactures. The cotton industry, which had taken root in Lancashire during that century, was one of the first industries to profit by the mechanical inventions. The old-established woollen trade was slower in adapting itself; whilst the potteries, another development of the eighteenth century, were still using mostly manual labour in 1800.

These alterations in methods of manufacture were accompanied by a shifting of class distinctions. In the middle of the seventeenth century the majority of the workers were independent and there were comparatively few wage-earners. With the growth of industries needing capital, and of machines which could not be purchased by a man of small means, the distinction between employers and employees tended to become much sharper socially. In former times the employee or journeyman hoped soon to become a master worker himself, but now he was unable to earn enough capital to set up for himself. The prevalent idea that the poor must be made to work caused hours to be very long and pay small. By the Poor Law it was permissible to farm children out to workers under the domestic system, and later to factory owners, who used them as they pleased. In the industrial areas, even if at home they were little better off, being sometimes put to work at five years of age. The rise in the price of food outdistanced the rise in wages, and the administration of poor relief did not keep pace with the increasing poverty of workers.

At the other end of the social industrial scale were those who had become wealthy through commerce or industry. Many used their money in ways which enabled them to join the ranks of the aristocracy, or at least to marry their daughters

into titled families. These were mostly members of the Church of England. Nonconformists, especially Quakers, more frequently let their trading capital increase.

With the changes in manufactures came a corresponding change in agriculture. The small farmers, dispossessed by capitalists, either became farm labourers, or swelled the ranks of the factory workers in towns, for the use of machinery had led to the segregation of the workers. Instead of living in cottages in the country they were crowded into large, badly arranged towns.

Another important development during the hundred and fifty years under review was that in means of transport. The packhorses of the clothiers had been slow and uncertain. Roads, such as there were, were badly maintained. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, improvements were made in the navigation of some of the rivers, but at the close of the century the barges on the Severn were still being towed by human beings. There was not even a horse towpath. However, by that time a number of canals had been projected and some made. In this way the transport of heavy goods from place to place was becoming easier.

One illustration may be given of the effect of this absence of good means of transport. The fact that Birmingham was not a corporate town induced a number of Nonconformists to settle there in the period following the Restoration. The town was a dozen miles or so from the main road running through Castle Bromwich. All goods had therefore to travel on horseback for some distance; so the inhabitants of Birmingham for this and other causes found it more profitable to make small metal goods as buttons and buckles, rather than heavy goods which were difficult of transport, and for this "toy" trade the city has since become famous. The growth of Birmingham also shows that the age-long customs and rights of such bodies as the craft and merchant guilds were being undermined by a new

class of industrialists who did not wish to be hampered by old regulations ill-adapted to changed conditions. The Reformation had tended to dissever the guilds from their religious basis; those who were members of the same branch of industry were not now necessarily members of the same church or sect. Gradually the restrictions imposed by these associations were broken down and unions of employers began to take their place, especially in the newer trades which had never been organized into guilds. Even in the more independent occupations, like that of mining, there was seldom combination among the employees. The attitude of some employers towards their employees in this period of transition has been described as not unlike that which maintained slavery in other countries.

Alterations similar in nature to those already outlined occurred in business life. The small shopkeeper took the place of the chapman or the pedlar, and dispensed to the villagers and townspeople the articles of food, ironware, tobacco, etc., which could not be obtained locally. The merchants of London remained, as they had been, a wealthy and privileged class; but merchant associations were springing up in other towns as they grew in population. With the increasing necessity for capital, old methods of finance were superseded. The goldsmiths had been the bankers in the seventeenth century, but in 1694 the Bank of England was founded. In the country towns shopkeepers and industrialists continued to borrow and to lend money for some time longer, but the second half of the eighteenth century saw a great development of private banking in England; in which development the Quakers had a prominent part.

The expansion of the British Empire by settlement and by conquest was both an outcome and a cause of industrial progress. Economic life was no longer confined to the parish, and had passed even national limits, although Great Britain was the largest free-trade area in Europe. In George III's reign

England could not grow enough to feed her population, and was importing foodstuffs in exchange for manufactured goods. The scarcity of corn made food riots not infrequent.

The contribution of Quakers to industrial life in Ireland was even more marked than in England, and as the social history of the two countries differed so much, it will be necessary to say a few words about Irish conditions. Three or four times during the seventeenth century Irish manufactures were making headway and then were crushed by warfare and by the jealousy of the new industrial classes in England. In Charles II's reign the woollen industry was re-established in Dublin by English merchants, and towards the end of the century Huguenot refugees stimulated the linen trade in Ulster. After the commercial classes had obtained a predominating influence in the English Parliament by the Revolution, Ireland was treated as a colony and was allowed to export little else than raw material for manufactures, and that only to England. The penal laws prevented the development of trade and industry by the Catholics, so that in the eighteenth century such economic life as was possible was mostly in the hands of the Protestants, particularly of the Huguenots, Presbyterians, and Quakers. The small colonies of traders in the Irish cities clung more closely to the guild system than did those in England, and the interdependence of hand manufactures and of farming continued in Ireland long after it had been superseded by the use of machinery in England.

Amid all these changes the Quakers moved, developing a social life of their own. Shut off from political life by their refusal to take an oath, debarred from education at the universities by the Test Act, the greater number of them devoted their energies to business and industrial pursuits.[1]

[1] For much of the information in this chapter I am indebted to R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, and to J. L. and B. Hammond's *The Rise of Modern Industry*.

CHAPTER II

GEORGE FOX AND BUSINESS ETHICS

THE writings of George Fox are mostly incidental in origin. He had probably neither the education nor the inclination to construct a statement of economic theory; but he believed that the Christian should avoid all compliance with social evils, and he made practical suggestions for remedying these evils in the comparatively simple business life with which he was familiar. At first his references to trade and industry are casual. In the earliest period of his ministry the assurance that God would speak directly to each individual and would lead him into truth was so overwhelming to himself that he did not at once realize that men would be slow to accept his message and to test it in their own lives. He expected a new age to begin in which all men recognizing "that of God in themselves" would, by following the Inner Light, both know and do what was right.

His first duty was to call all to repentance and to lead them to look within for that spiritual guidance which he and others had failed to find by human help. As William Penn says of him: "In his testimony or ministry he much laboured to open truth to people's understandings and to bottom them upon the principle and principal, Christ Jesus the Light of the World, that by bringing them to something that was of God in themselves they might the better know and judge of him and of themselves."[1] But as Fox proclaimed his message through the towns and villages of England he was impelled to witness against the evil trading customs which were prevalent. Sum-

[1] Preface to *Journal of George Fox*, Bi-cent. ed., London, 1891, Vol. I. p. xlvi.

marizing his activities in 1648 he says: "In fairs, also, and in markets, I was made to declare against their deceitful merchandize, cheating, and cozening; warning all to deal justly, to speak the truth, to let their Yea be Yea, and their Nay be Nay; and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them; forewarning them of the great and terrible day of the Lord, which would come upon them all."[1] At Kendal in 1652 he emphasized his message by symbolic action in the manner of the Hebrew prophets. "I went," he says, "into Kendal Market and spoke to the people at the market time; I had silver in my pocket and I was moved to throw it out among the people as I was going up the street before I spoke, and my life was offered up among them, and the mighty power of the Lord was so mighty and so strong that people flew before [me] and run into the shops for fear and terror took hold upon them."[2] At Lancaster, Carlisle, and Warwick also he preached against the deceitful ways which were used in trading. Four years later, after his long and trying imprisonment in Launceston in 1656, he paid two short visits to London; it was probably during one of these that he issued a pamphlet to the citizens of the capital which illustrates in more detail what he must have said in other places. Its title is "A cry for repentance unto the inhabitants of London chiefly, and unto all those whose fruits do shame their profession, that they may come to know the way of life out of the evil communications which corrupts good manners."[3] He begins by calling the various classes in the city to repentance. "Repent, ye Tradesmen of London, repent, ye Merchants and great men of the city, the day of the Lord's hand is coming upon you, the day of the Lord's wrath is to be poured upon you, who have lived in wickedness, fulness, and gluttony, and serving the creature

[1] *Journal of George Fox*, Bi-cent. ed, I. pp. 39, 40.
[2] *The Short Journal, etc., of George Fox*, ed. N. Penney, Cambridge, 1925, p. 21.
[3] *Gospel Truth Demonstrated*, G. Fox, London, 1706, pp. 73–6.

more than the Creator, who is God blessed for ever. . . . Ye Tradesmen, whatsoever calling you follow, . . . ye Watermen and Fishermen, . . . turn to the Lord by repentance, whilst you have a day of mercy offered you; ye poorer sort of people, who are drudging, labouring, toiling in the earth under the great ones, repent; . . . all ye Husbandmen, tillers of the earth or keepers of cattle, repent, that your minds may be brought out of the earth, and be turned unto the Lord, and that your minds may be brought out of the greediness of gain." If they are simple and exact in speech they will not waste time in bargaining, but will show that they love Christ's doctrine. "So a child shall trade with you as a man because of the equity . . . and people shall not be afraid of one cheating the other, or destroying one the other, where truth and equity is among them, and mercy and righteousness. . . ." Porters and labourers of every sort are also called upon to repent, and then a passage follows which shows that George Fox was not thinking only of personal regeneration for each individual, but also of a better state of society in which men would recognize their duty towards those less favoured than they were themselves. "So have Christians been an ill savour, . . . who . . . are not at a word in their calling and trading, and commerce with people, for which the heathen, which are no Christians, judge them, as the Gentiles, the Jews. . . . You Tradesmen, buyers, and sellers of all sorts, or hirers of labourers at a word speak, and see before you speak, keep to Yea and Nay in all your communications, this will keep you out of the evil, whatsoever is more comes of evil; with this will you come to answer that of God in the heathen, whom in righteousness God will judge. . . . This is the word of the Lord God to you all, ye rulers of the earth, that Righteousness and Mercy, Judgment and Equity may run down, streaming in the nation, that the oppressed may see relief, and the peaceable be eased, and the poor and needy

may not be turned away, that this may run down all that which is called Christendom, that professeth Christ, who is come to reign. . . ."

While chiefly impressed by the lack of truthfulness and sincerity shown by men in their bargaining with their customers or employees, Fox also makes the wider appeal, to seek first the Kingdom of God and not to be absorbed by the things of the world. He does not suggest that trade is wrong in itself or unworthy of the Christian, but that it is not to be made the principal business of life.

Two years later in another message to the merchants of London he gives further details with regard to their deceitful methods, and again emphasizes social responsibility.[1]

"As a swift witness is the Lord come to plead with you, and against you that use deceitfulness in your merchandize, and use it in your buying and selling, and Sir, and bow the hat, and scrape the foot, and make the courtesy, and Master, and Mistress in your service, and Forsooth; this is your vain custom; and ask many times double the worth of the thing of some people; and under this complementing way and in it, lies the deceit and over-reaching, and lurks to cozen and cheat, telling a falsehood, a flattery; so, by fair speaking, and flattering words, oft times the simple is deceived. . . . Be true, be faithful to God, be just, be innocent, and ask no more for the thing than you will have; . . . when you ask more than you will have or almost double, and say you will not take it except you have so much, and then send your boys after them and so take it, you are not here at So say and so do,[2] . . . take heed of cozening and cheating of people with your dark back-windows;

[1] *Gospel Truth Demonstrated*, pp. 127–30.

[2] It must be remembered that in the seventeenth century it was not the custom to have a "fixed price" for goods whether in the shop or market. Quakers were pioneers in their practical stand against bargaining under any conditions. See post pp. 31, 146 ff.

for truth is risen that will keep out all deceit; therefore be sober, and take it patiently and live in it, for truth will make you free." He also begs them not to deceive the country people who deal with them, and to act that "a child may come among you and not be wronged."

Social evils and the pitiable condition of the poor of London also find a place in the essay, as in most of Fox's writings on these matters. As early as 1648, when he was in Mansfield, he had asked "the Justices who fixed wages not to oppress the servants in their wages, but to do that which was right and just to them," and he "exhorted the servants to do their duties and serve honestly." He adds: "They all received my exhortations kindly, for I was moved of the Lord therein."[1]

But the problem of wages does not seem to have affected him as much as the care of the poor. In *The Vials of Wrath upon the Man of Sin*,[2] Fox calls upon earthly minded men to give over oppressing the poor; "for," he says, "ye are all of one mould and blood; ye that set your nests on high, join house to house, field to field, till there be no place for the poor, woe is your portion. . . ." He goes on to give a word of advice and hope to the sufferers: "You that have not so much of this earth, give over your murmuring and reasoning, fretting and grudging, for all your want is the want of God; the righteous God is coming to give to every one of you according to your works." In 1657 and again in 1658 he appealed to the magistrates of London to provide for the poor, the blind, the lame, who were crying up and down the streets for bread. Such action, he told them, would be the fruits of religion, but the fruits of the flesh were apparent in their jewels, rings, and dainty attire, and their "hair powdered like bags of meal." He recommended them to open a storehouse from which all

[1] *Journal of George Fox*, Bi-cent. ed., I. p. 27.
[2] *Gospel Truth Demonstrated*, pp. 11–14.

might receive as much relief as they needed. "A preserver of creation visits the sick and fatherless and causeth not the blind to wander; cannot God bring the proudest of you all down, and make you as poor as them that wander in the streets, because you do not do good in your lifetime? Therefore come to work and do the work of the Lord while ye have poor, ye great ones; and come to the feeling of these things, ye magistrates; that none of these may lie up and down your streets while it is in your power to do good. . . . For there is so much destroyed in your superfluity and vanity, that would maintain the weak, lame, and blind, that is spent upon your lusts."[1]

The Quaker plea for simplicity in dress and for restraint in all forms of recreation was not merely an ascetic trait or a Puritan survival, but was based by George Fox on the thought of the common brotherhood of men. It was a practical way of trying to advance the more equitable distribution of wealth. In another paper,[2] full of detail ridiculing the absurdities of the wearing apparel of the period, he combats the statement that use of luxuries gives employment to the poor. He tells those who believe this to turn all their jewels, gorgeous apparel, and extravagant attire into money and to give it to the poor, and then all would be satisfied; the poor would be provided for, and as for themselves, if there were no such fashions people would be satisfied with what they had and not always be wanting something else which they saw another person wearing.[3]

By the time of the Restoration, George Fox must have realized that the age of righteousness was not coming as soon as he had hoped, so he thought out more fully the true attitude

[1] *Gospel Truth Demonstrated*, pp. 105, 106. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 159 (1st so numbered).

[3] This principle that luxury is not really good for trade was further developed by William Penn, John Bellers, and John Woolman; in this the Quakers were a long way ahead of the leaders of thought on economics in these centuries.

for a Christian to adopt in his business relations. Many shopkeepers, merchants, and dealers of all sorts had by this time accepted his message, and were trying to live in accord with the guidance of God. To them in 1661 Fox addressed a letter, or epistle as he calls it, from which quotations have been made in Quaker official documents up to the present day. Its title is practically a summary of the contents: "The Line of righteousness and justice stretched forth over all merchants etc.; and an exhortation unto all Friends and people whatsoever who are merchants, tradesmen, husbandmen or seamen, who deal in merchandise, trade in buying or selling by sea or land, or deal in husbandry, that ye all do that which is just, equal and righteous in the sight of God and men; and that ye use just weights and just measures, and speak and do that which is true, just and right in all things; so that your conversations, lives, practices and tongues, may preach to all people, and the good, just and righteous principle of God in them all. In which ye may be serviceable unto God and to the creation in your generation, and a blessing both to God and man."[1]

The letter begins with an appeal to the religious instinct in man. "All Friends everywhere, live in the seed of God, which is the righteousness itself, and inherits the wisdom, and is the wisdom itself; with which wisdom ye may order rule and govern all things which are under your hands (which God hath given you) to His glory. Govern and order with His wisdom all the creatures that ye have under you, and all Exchanging, Merchandizing, Husbandry, . . . Do what ye do in the wisdom of God and with it, . . . for it is pure and preserves pure. . . . Keep all in the power of God . . . in which power of God ye will be preserved in justice, in truth, in equal balance, and weights and measures, in the truth, uprightness and honesty to all people. So all here in this are serviceable to

[1] *Epistles*, G. Fox, London, 1698, No. 200, pp. 156–62.

God in their generation, and to the creation, and to God are a blessing. . . . Do rightly, justly, truly, holily, equally to all people in all things; and that is according to that of God in every man."

This is neither the doctrine of the Medieval Church, of salvation through good works, nor of the Calvinist, of good works as the natural fruits of salvation. It is rather an expression of the right place of the individual in the family of God. Brothers do not consider what good works they may do to each other from selfish motives, but willingly render loving service as a natural outcome of their sonship. Especially must they do nothing which may be a stumbling-block to the weaker brethren, among whom Fox includes those of other nations as well as his own. He saw something of the international aspect of fair trading, and sums up this part of his advice with the words, "Be careful to do good in all things to all people whatsoever."

To "all husbandmen and dealers about husbandry . . . cattle or ground," he gives the same advice, "to do rightly, holily, justly, honestly, plainly and truly to all men and people, whomsoever ye have to deal withal; speak truth, act truth . . ."

For centuries before the time of Fox, writers had debated on the question of usury and whether the taking of interest on capital was wrong. By the seventeenth century the term "usury" was generally applied only to unjust exactions or an exceptionally high rate of interest. Fox has more to say about the effect of a loan on the borrower than about the ethics of lending.

"All of what trade or calling soever, keep out of debts; owe no man anything but love. Go not beyond your estates, lest ye bring yourselves to trouble, and cumber, and a snare; keep low and down in all things ye act. For a man that would be great, and goes beyond his estate, lifts himself up, runs into

debt, and lives highly of other men's means; he is a waster of other men's [goods] and a destroyer. He is not serviceable to the creation, but a destroyer of the creation and creatures, and cumbereth himself and troubleth others, and is lifted up, who would appear to be some body; but being from the honest, the just and good, falls into shame. . . . And no one (of what calling soever) run into debt, usury and exaction; for many people have been wronged thereby; they that have taken of them, . . . by it have appeared great, and lived above what they were." Those who live "in the Life" will by their actions and words be "a terror . . . to all the defrauders, cozeners, cheaters, over-reachers, liars and wrong-dealers"; even such men will in the end be brought to acknowledge the righteousness of those who deal fairly. The thought that trading must be kept within just bounds is further developed. "And all Friends everywhere, that are shopkeepers or merchants, or factors, or any other trades, keep low in the power of God, and do not go beyond your capacity, nor reach after things more than ye can perform, and answer all men, . . . within and without, and truth and justice in your returns, that ye may keep your words. So say, and so do; which is the royal law of liberty in all your tradings, else ye are a dishonour to Christianity. Therefore see your business, that what ye do and what ye say ye may perform, that ye may not break your words and promises; for if ye do, ye go to loss; neither are ye masters of what ye take in hand; for a master should be atop of things, and be in that which can command things." Their sincerity must lead them to have a clear idea of the financial condition of their business so that when others ask them or write to them, they may answer truly how things are with them, and none be wronged or oppressed through their neglect. Thus by keeping to justice, moderation, and truth in all their business, they will be a good savour to God and in the hearts of all people. If they are honest men and

women in the outward treasure, they will be ready to receive the true and heavenly treasure.

Twelve years after this letter was written Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory* was published. Representing as it does the best Puritan thought of the period, those sections of it which relate to buying and selling and to oppression may be compared with the Quaker epistle. In the main both Fox and Baxter accepted the economic situation of the time, as far as they saw it, but Baxter was a cleric and Fox a layman; the one writing emanates from the study, the other from the market-place. Baxter was probably more conscious than Fox of the growth of industry which needed capital to finance it; both condemn "usury" if unfair and oppressive. With regard to the ethics of buying and selling, Fox is the more drastic. He will not allow the seller to hide anything from the buyer, nor to bargain at all; Baxter, on the other hand, thinks there are certain cases where a variation in the price may be allowed and bargaining permissible, yet on the whole he agrees with Fox on the principle of the fixed price. Both insist that business must be carried on for the good of all, and not for motives of personal gain, and Baxter is in agreement with Fox in saying, "To save the lives of people in want we must spare anything from ourselves that our own lives can spare."[1] In the *Christian Directory* he does not show as much sympathy for the poor as Fox did in his writings, and even says that it may be better to maintain the honour of kings and magistrates than to save the lives of those of little use to the Commonwealth. Fox looks on the value of man in God's sight rather than his value in the State. In fact Baxter has exceptions to most of his rules, while Fox has none; Baxter seems mostly concerned with framing principles of moral conduct, giving in minute detail rules for the guidance of his parishioners and others in every emer-

[1] *Christian Directory*, ed. J. Tawney, London, 1925, pp. 170, 171.

gency of life. Fox gives but a few principles applicable to all occasions and believes that obedience to that of God in themselves will lead men to "serve God in truth and one another in their generation" whether in trade or any other activity of life.

In Fox's later writings there are only casual allusions to the subject of business morality, but some of his letters tell the results of his advice to Friends. Writing in 1667 he says: "For at first ye know that many could not take so much money in your trade as to buy bread with; all stood a loose of you, when you stood upright, and gave them the plain language, and were at a word; but now, you through the Life come to answer that of God in all, they say they will trust you before their own people knowing that you will not cheat nor wrong nor cozen nor oppress them; for the cry is now amongst them that are without, 'Where is there a Quaker for such and such a trade?' So that they will deal with Friends before they will deal with their own. Oh! therefore Friends who have purchased this through great sufferings lose not this great favour which God hath given unto you, but that ye may answer the witness of God in every man, which witnesseth to your faithfulness, that they may glorify your Father on your behalf." He goes on to warn them that the world will say "the Quakers are not as they were" if any of them are known to oppress others or run into debt, or break promises or live beyond their means.[1] Thus early a trait so characteristic of Friends in the eighteenth century appears—any deviation from the truth is detrimental to the good reputation of the Society as a whole. In a paper against the Pomps of the World (1682), Fox refers to the difficulties experienced in their trade by those who stood as witnesses against vanities. It was especially the tailors who suffered in this way.[2]

[1] *Epistles*, p. 251.

[2] For examples, see post Ch. VI.

A year later at a time of great persecution, when many Friends had most or all of their property taken from them for tithes and other exactions connected with the established Church, Fox reminded them how Friends in previous persecutions had done their best to prevent goods, which were really not their own, being taken by those who came to distrain. "Dear Friends," he wrote, "take care that all your offerings be free, and of your own that have cost you something; so that ye may not offer of that which is another man's, or that which ye are entrusted withal and not your own, or fatherless' or widows' estates; but all such things settle and establish in their places. You may remember many years ago, in a time of great persecution, divers Friends, who were traders, shopkeepers and others, had the concerns of widows and fatherless, and other people's estates in their hands. And when a great suffering, persecution and spoiling of goods came upon Friends, especial care was taken that all might offer up to the Lord in their sufferings what was really their own, and not any other people's estates or goods which they had in their hands; and that they might not offer up another body's but that which they had bought and paid for, or were able to pay for. Afterwards several letters came out of the country to the meeting at London from Friends that had goods of the shopkeepers at London upon a credit, which they had not paid for; who wrote to their creditors whom they had their goods of, entreating them to take their goods again. And some Friends came to London themselves, and treated with their creditors, letting them understand that they lay liable to have all that they had taken from them; and told them they would not have any man to suffer by them; neither would they by suffering offer up anything but what was really their own or what they were able to pay for. Upon which several took their goods again. This wrought a very good savour in the hearts

of many people when they saw such a righteous, just and honest principle in Friends, that would not make any suffer for their testimony; but what they did suffer for the testimony of Jesus should be really and truly their own and not other people's. In this they owed nothing to anyone but love."[1]

Fox's hints on right conduct in business life are like grains of gold among the sand of wordy and curiously constructed sentences, or rather they are like living seeds which contain within themselves great possibilities of growth if they fall on good ground.

As a boy he had been noted for the fewness of his words and for the accuracy of his speech, and probably this personal characteristic was at the root of his dislike of bargaining. He felt such a method was waste of time, and that it produced dishonesty and insincerity. It has been said that the stand that Quakers made against bargaining led to the adoption of the fixed price in the retail trade in England. But this seems to me to need explanation. Many writers on economic subjects had discussed the question of the just or fair price. Most had agreed that the right course was to have prices fixed officially, and this was done, partly at least, in England up to the seventeenth century. In New England stringent regulations were made against those who asked more than the current price. To the theorists the idea of an official price appealed because they could not determine who else was to say what the fair price was. What seemed a just price to the seller might be more than the value that the buyer put on the article. Fox looks at it from the seller's point of view. The trader is to put on the article the fairest price which he can estimate, and then he is not to use flattery or deceit or any other means to make the buyer take an article which is not of the value which he considers he wants.

[1] *Journal of George Fox*, Bi-cent. ed., II. p. 379.

It was the honesty of the Quaker which ensured to the buyer that his purchase was of the value which he desired. It was this which made the Quaker tradesman sought after. Gradually, very gradually, other people have come to see the waste of time that bargaining entails; but even still in out-of-the-way districts it is not uncommon. Sincerity and simplicity were also the virtues recommended when Fox pleaded that all trading should be kept within bounds so that a man should only undertake as much business as he could carry on without injustice to others. If everyone lived simply there would be enough for all; and if a man was really sincere he would not live on other people's money, but make his expenses less than his income. This does not touch on the question of capital and interest, but at least Fox does not write against the lending of money at interest, and we know that he himself had shares in a ship, a transaction which was something of the same nature. If the Puritans on the whole at the time of the Restoration were inclined to favour complete individual freedom in trade, Fox's strong sense of social obligation saved the Society of Friends from following in their steps.

CHAPTER III

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY THEORY

IN considering the views of other seventeenth-century Quakers on the ethics of business we shall find that they are usually on lines similar to those of George Fox, practical advice rather than theoretical statement. Perhaps the nearest approach to a treatise on applied Christianity found among early Quaker writings is William Smith's *Universal Love* (published in 1663). The writer had been an Independent pastor before he became a Quaker and was a great help to the Quaker fellowship in the Midlands. He divided his book into twelve sections, of which four are addressed respectively to masters and dames of families, to servants in their places, to such as trade in weights and measures, and to such as buy and sell in markets or in any other places.

The sections "To such as trade in weights and measures" and "To such as buy and sell in markets" deal with the accessories and with the methods of trade. Men are called by the Lord to trade as to other services, and they must be faithful in the performance of their duties. Self seeks self-advantage and inclines to deceit, but the Light of Christ within reproves such methods; the man that has false weights or measures or an unequal balance has a guilty conscience towards God. Equally wrong is an attempt to gloze over any defects in that which is to be sold, or to try to accomplish a sale by multiplicity of words—a practice which often leads to false swearing. All these methods are bad examples for apprentices over whom care must be exercised, that they may be taught the fear of God and to make a right use of their leisure. Man was created upright,

but he has adopted many inventions which lead to evil and deceit; but "the created uprightness is a pure, just, and holy state, a state that stands upright to God, and unto all men, it is not a subtile Inventor, but a simple Dealer in all things, it cannot lie for gain, nor swear for profit, nor curse for wealth, it cannot deceive nor defraud any man in dealing though much outward profit might be seen in the end, it cannot commend a thing above what it really knows it to be, it cannot make many words in bargaining; for it is an upright state and speaks things uprightly and justly, and speaks no more than it knows to be true and not that at all times; . . . it hath no reservedness in it to take or ensnare another by deceit, for it is upright in all things."[1] This "created uprightness" is the good which is to be found in man in spite of his degeneration, and it is the Light of Christ in the heart which leads him to see how he has fallen away by his deceitful practices.

Smith is more explicit than Fox with regard to the just price. He believes that the seller guided by the pure principle within him will be able to "discern" what the fair value is, so that there will be no need for bargaining which leads to too much talk and noise and even at times bodily striving in the markets! He adds a word of caution against spending too long in the alehouse on market day; the time and money thus spent cannot be recovered, therefore it is better to take only needful refreshment and to go home at once.

Two methods of dealing frequently used at the time and also much later were forestalling and engrossing. The former is the buying of goods on their way to market with the intention of selling them again at a higher price; the latter is the purchasing of a very large quantity of goods to create a scarcity and so enhance the price. Both were illegal, and

[1] *Universal Love*, W. Smith, 1663, pp. 100, 101.

Smith's objection is that they are the outcome of covetousness and are oppressive to the poor.

Men who are seeking to be wealthy and to be "great dealers in all things" are always in the "thronged part and in the cumber about many things;" this is prejudicial to spiritual growth. Those who are changed by the Light and walking in the fear of God can say with truth, "that it is better to walk one day in the Light, though it be in the Cross unto themselves, than to satisfy themselves by gaining the world through inventions."[1]

George Fox the younger in an exhortation to families, written about 1659, also touched on methods of trade. In common with his namesake, with Smith, and with other Quaker writers he believed that if a man guided himself in all trading by the wisdom given by God he would be led to speak the exact truth about the creatures of God which are to be bought or sold or exchanged, and that this "witness of truth" in one man will find a response in the soul of another. "Keep in the Light which is equal, that when ye offer or ask a price for the creatures it may be in equality; and let that be your rule and not the price of the market, except that be equal, that so ye may reach the equal principle one in another."[2]

Humphrey Smith makes an interesting deduction with reference to foreign trade in a book called *For the Honour of the King*. One chapter is headed "Concerning the honour the King might have by the uprightness of his subjects in their traffic with other nations." He says that if all the King's subjects "or most part of them" were absolutely accurate in their speech, their words would be of more value than the oaths of most princes' subjects in the world. The reputation of such a people would be so great that into whatever part of the world

[1] *Universal Love*, p. 105.

[2] *Collected Works of George Fox the Younger*, 2nd ed., London, 1665, pp. 42, 43: see also the *Works of C. Marshall*, London, 1704, pp. 14, 15.

its traders came everyone would be willing to deal with them. "And would not this also promote trading, and so enrich the Kingdom, and be some means to relieve the poor? And is not the enriching of the Kingdom to the King's honour? And would it not be for his honour that had such a people as did neither seek nor ask but a just price wherever they come amongst all the nations of the world?"[1]

As important as the principle of the fair price was the advice to keep business undertakings within manageable bounds. In a short paper published in 1663 Benjamin Lindley tells his fellow Quakers to take heed that they "do not go beyond their ability and so be plunged into the world as many young men have been. . . . Feel the pure wisdom of God lead you into what you do and so in God's time as you grow in His understanding, . . . He will add unto you His blessing and you shall prosper in the land, . . . as you abide in the life that is, and keeps atop of the world's life, commerce and trade."

Friends by their honesty were already attracting customers and building up for themselves comfortable businesses. I do not suggest that any special business capacity was the result of following the Quaker faith.[2] Many lost through distraint and imprisonment what they had gained by truthfulness and fair dealing. Yet in spite of this there was at the end of the first thirty years of Quakerism a growing danger that many of its

[1] *For the Honour of the King*, H. Smith, London, 1661, pp. 8, 9.

[2] In an article in *Science Progress*, April 1922, E. H. Hankin, M.A., writing on "The Mental Ability of the Quakers" (pp. 654–64), says: "Wherever the history of the Quaker families is sufficiently known, it appears that the power of making money did appear, and that it only appeared at the time of or shortly after their conversion." I have not found any evidence in support of this statement, but some to the contrary. A further suggestion in the same paper that Quakerism is a creed "in which sensible reasoning about many matters of daily conduct is regarded as a temptation of the Evil One" seems to me to show a misunderstanding of the fundamentals of the Quaker faith, and is certainly not borne out by the records of Quaker business life.

less enthusiastic adherents should become too much occupied with worldly matters. In 1680 Stephen Crisp wrote "An Epistle of tender counsel and advice to all who have believed the truth everywhere, to exhort them to faithfulness thereunto." He first warns against the dangers of mere formality in outward things, such as dress, without having the true life of the Spirit within; later he goes on to show the hindrance of over-absorption in business. A man has three duties, "to take care of his family, and to be diligent in the calling God hath set him in, and to improve such opportunities as God pleaseth to put into his hand." But danger lies in the fact that the care may become immoderate, the diligence turn into slavery, the opportunities be used to the detriment of one's neighbour, and the desire for wealth become "daily more and more, till a man comes in time to have the increase or decrease of these things to be the objects of his joy or sorrow, and then he is miserable."[1]

Friends were in line with the ordinary Puritan view that trade may be for the individual the calling or service in which God wishes him to be, but by their strong sense of duty to others they were guarded against the error of believing it to be an end in itself, and a means of working out one's personal salvation. The line of thought which led to moderation in dress and manner of living led also to moderation in business activities. There was no question of driving business "as far as it will go,"[2] nor of devoting all one's powers to it. Puritanism has been charged with being an important factor in the creation of the modern capitalistic spirit; but if that means that the accumulation of wealth is to be regarded as a good in itself,[3] then Friends have combated such an opinion.

[1] *Collected Works*, Stephen Crisp, London, 1694, p. 430.
[2] See *Religion and Capitalism*, R. H. Tawney, p. 246.
[3] *Essay on the Economic Effects of the Reformation*, G. O'Brien, London, 1923, p. 73.

Crisp gives further advice on the necessity of moderation: "Take heed of enlarging your trades and traffics beyond your ability and beyond your capacity; for both these evils have been the ruin of some. . . . Oh, Friends, wait to feel the governing hand of God in these things, . . . that so He may be acknowledged by you the Lord of earth as well as of heaven; the Ruler of your tradings and dealings as well of your religion and profession." Crisp was a Colchester weaver, and was a man of good business capacity, ever ready to give advice in the solution of difficult problems. Sometimes he felt called to make an individual appeal. In a letter to a friend in 1678 he frankly tells him that he is afraid he has run into debt to plunder others by fair means. "It is an easy matter to preach and incur fines, when thou knowest others' goods must bear the loss; thou art on the surest side, and then if it be taken away at last a whining complaint of suffering for truth's sake, must serve instead of paying thy debts. . . . Dear John, I wish thou would yet take my counsel, and send every friend their goods home with the money for what thou hast sold of theirs, and take thee to thy employment where God blessed thee and in which thou grew up."[1] In those days, when it was difficult to send cash from one town to another and there were no bank cheques the "bill of exchange" was a usual form of transaction. This was a note ordering the payment of a sum of money in one place to some person assigned by the drawer or remitter in consideration of the value paid to him in another place. If the remitter had sufficient goods in hand to meet the obligation when due, Friends did not disapprove, nor did they think it wrong to buy goods on credit, for if not sold they could be returned. But they condemned any transaction of a purely speculative nature, such as accommodation bills, when there was no real security in the form of goods, etc.

[1] *Memoirs of S. Crisp*, S. Tuke, York, 1824, p. 5.

Crisp says that all who sign any bill or promise "pawn the truth" every time they do so, and one who fails to fulfil his obligation forfeits what he has pawned, namely his truth. He would be very careful to redeem his cloak or coat from pawn, and how much more should he be careful of truth. He instances as causes of failure, over-trading, buying more goods than can be sold under the circumstances, and becoming surety for someone else. Everyone who has occasion to borrow or to sign a bill ought to have some definite security which he can show (money due to him, goods, or lands), and ought not to trust to returns of adventure, increase of crops, or gains of trade. "For you will find more peace in conscience, and a better answering of truth to make a new engagement of land or goods, than to break an old engagement of your truth and profession."[1]

William Penn, in *No Cross, No Crown*, has also a good deal to say about over-trading. He defines covetousness as being of three kinds: the desiring of unlawful things, the unlawfully desiring lawful things, and lastly, hoarding up or unprofitably withholding the benefit of them from the relief of private persons or the public. A religious man ought to know when he has enough, and not consider the increase of his wealth as a reason for launching further into trade. "This is as if cumber not retirement, and gain not content, were the duty and comfort of a Christian. . . . 'Tis plain that most people strive not for substance, but wealth. Some there be that love it strongly and spend it liberally when they have got it. Though this be sinful, yet more commendable than to love money for money's sake." Those who strive after riches are enslaved. "Do not we see how early they rise; how late they go to bed; how full of the Change, the shop, the warehouse, the custom-house; of bills, bonds, charter-parties, etc., they are?" About

[1] *Works*, S. Crisp, pp. 430–4.

misers he becomes finely ironical: "He is wretched that hungers with money in a cook's shop; yet having made a god of gold who knows but he thinks it unnatural to eat what he worships?" He speaks, too, of those who, when sick, would not spare a fee to a doctor . . . "and so died to save charges; a constancy that canonizes them martyrs for money." Covetousness tends to corruption, and leads men to defraud the Government of customs and other dues. It is unfair to young traders and to servants, who should be allowed scope to gain means of subsistence for themselves, while the old and rich should give time to "think of leaving this world well, in which they have been so busy, that they might obtain a share in the other, of which they have been so careless."

Closely associated with the love of money is the love of luxury, which Penn defines as an excessive indulgence of self in ease and pleasure. He answers more fully than George Fox had done the objection that many families make their living out of the supply of the fashions and recreations which he condemns. "'Tis the vanity of the few great ones that makes so much toil for the many small." Those now employed in luxury trades would contribute more directly to the general well-being if they were engaged in the cultivation of more land, or in the production of serviceable articles. "Let such of those Vanity-Hucksters as have got sufficient be contented to retreat and spend it more honestly than they got it; and such as are really poor be rather helped by charity to better callings."

He returns to the subject when writing of temperance.[1] "When people have first learned to fear, worship and obey their Creator, to pay their numerous vicious debts, to alleviate and abate their oppressed tenants; but above all outward regards, when the pale faces are more commiserated, the

[1] I.e. self-control and moderation in everything, not only in the narrower meaning at present in use.

pinched bellies relieved, and naked backs clothed; when the famished poor, the distressed widow and helpless orphan (God's works and your fellow-creatures) are provided for; then, I say (if then), it will be time enough for you to plead the indifferency of your pleasures." Temperance is politically good. It keeps out foreign vanities and improves home productions. If resorted to by everyone in the State it would enable those whose estates were encumbered to clear them, and those who have a small stock-in-trade to increase it. Further, if all the money spent in a parish on luxuries and in taverns were collected instead into a public stock, beggars, the aged, the impotent, widows and orphans, could be relieved, and there might still be money over for charitable purposes outside the borders of the parish. In *Some Fruits of Solitude*, also, Penn has maxims on moderation and its effect on others.[1]

We shall have to consider in another chapter definite suggestions for the care of the poor, but we turn now to the relations between masters and servants. In the two sections of William Smith's *Universal Love* which deal with this subject the writer accepts the contemporary—a somewhat patriarchal—relation. He would not have the masters exercise their power despotically. Let them treat their servants so that they serve with joy rather than with grief. Servants should be taught to know the fear of God, and to make a profitable use of their leisure. Masters should be very strict in overseeing the use made by their servants of Sundays and other holidays. Better for them to be at work, than at football, cudgels, dancing, revelling, or drinking in alehouses. Such occupations are not real liberty, but bondage to the body, and probably for days afterwards the servant's work will suffer because of the wrong use of the holiday. To care for servants truly, masters must

[1] For these quotations and other passages bearing on the same subject, see the *Collected Works of William Penn*, London, 1726, pp. 341–4, 366, 372, 823, 854.

first mind the principle of God in themselves, and take heed to the reproof of the Light of Christ Jesus in their own conscience. Family worship which is real and not formal will have a wholesome influence on the relations between the members of the household.

Smith is, of course, thinking chiefly of young men and women resident in their employer's house, and to them he says as he had done to their masters, to mind the principle of God in themselves; in this way their work will be for the Lord and well performed, whether their earthly master's eye is on them or not. That of God in them will condemn them for wrong-doing even if their faults are not discovered by those in whose employment they are. How near he is in spirit to George Herbert who lived a generation earlier:

All may of Thee partake,
  Nothing can be so mean,
But with His tincture, "for Thy sake"
  Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
  Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
  Makes that and the action fine.

Smith tells those in service that they will make the best use of their free time if they spend it in reading the Scriptures, if able to read; and in any case in meditating on the good things of God. They are to keep in their own places, be content with what food and clothing they have, and obey their masters, not aspiring to equality with them. He warns them against restlessness and recommends them to stay as long as possible in the same situation, unless they are oppressed above their strength.[1]

Smith evidently did not consider the question of wages a

[1] *Universal Love*, W. Smith, pp. 13–28.

pressing one, but George Fox the younger was anxious that justice should be done in the matter. "Lay no more," he says, "upon your servants than ye would be willing should be laid upon you, if ye were in their places and conditions. Mark that, and forbear threatening them; and be not hasty to turn them away, if they be willing to abide with you; but in patience and meekness show them their place and service, and therein teach them if they know it not. And let them have for their service that which is convenient,[1] just and reasonable, that they may have no just cause to murmur or complain. And keep out of covetousness, lest that hinder you from giving them sufficient liberty who desire it for going to the meetings of the people of the Lord. And if in the wisdom of God ye see freedom to turn any away, give them sufficient warning, that they may provide themselves otherways, for this is just and reasonable."[2]

This same principle of real justice, based on the idea of the Fatherhood of God, also underlies William Penn's advice to his children. He counselled them to have trustworthy servants whose influence on the young people of the family would be for good. They are to be told clearly what their duties are and what their wages will be, and to be treated so that they work rather for love than for fear. In *Some Fruits of Solitude*, Penn has a number of pithy sayings on the duties of masters and servants. Masters are advised not to get angry at a servant's mistakes. "Remember . . . that God's goodness not thy merit has made the difference between thee and him." The servant is reminded that he must be true and not defraud his master of time, of care, or of money on trust.[3]

The absence of any comment on the position of wage-earners who were not resident in their masters' households

[1] *Johnson's Dictionary* shows that the seventeenth-century meaning of convenient was fit, suitable, proper.

[2] *Works*, G. Fox the younger, pp. 39–40.

[3] See *Works*, W. Penn, 1726 ed., p. 830, also pp. 856, 857, 904.

shows how different the England of the seventeenth century was from that of to-day. If such workers had special difficulties of their own they did not attract the attention of these writers, although, coming as they did from various ranks of life and travelling all over the country on their preaching tours, they must have been thoroughly conversant with the social life of all classes in England.

Before passing on to the eighteenth century it may be well to sum up the thoughts common to writers of the first and second generations of Quakerism. Whilst doing so we must keep our sense of perspective. Business morality was not by itself their subject, but was included in the religious appeal which they were making. They were not men who were conversant with "big" industry and finance, which scarcely existed in the England of their day. They did not set out with the idea of discussing the relations between ethics and economics, but starting from their own living experience of the reality of God they were forced to call men to repentance and to point them to a better way of life. They saw that many of the methods employed by those who bought and sold in the market-place and in the shop were not in accordance with the will of God, and they besought men to adopt a saner view of life which would lead them away from such deceits.

Believing in the possibility of the Light of Christ enlightening every man individually and leading him into the truth, they held that anyone who followed the guidance of this Inner Light would be enabled to act and to speak truly in all the circumstances of life. For them there was no division between religious and secular; even the little details of trade were part of the duty owed to God and one's fellow men. Truth was absolute; the guidance given to one man would not be at variance with that given to another, so that even in the matter of the correct price to charge for an article the man

who was wholly dependent on God would know what to ask. Further, he would not try to overpraise it, nor to hide any of its defects, nor seek in any way to take advantage of a fellow creature. The man who always endeavoured to speak the truth did not need to use many words in bargaining and so waste time which would be better spent. A promise once made was a part of truth and therefore the breaking of it was evil; monetary transactions were of the nature of promises, and those who were in debt to anyone were departing from the truth if they did not pay what they owed. Whether in England or in foreign countries simple sincerity in word and deed would find a response in the hearts of those with whom they dealt, and so the cause of truth would prosper.

The second great deduction that they made from their religious experience was that as this Light could illuminate the minds of everyone, all men and women were in the same relation to God and so were to be treated as brothers because God was their Father. Business as a whole was to be carried on in the way which was of most service to the community, and not as a means of gaining wealth for one's self; neither was any trade to be followed which encouraged vice. After the Restoration it seemed to the more seriously minded men in the country that unbounded luxury was an even greater evil than drunkenness, and Friends made a very firm stand against it in their own lives. They really acted on Penn's maxim that "the very trimming of the vain world would clothe all the naked one." Whilst desiring publicly that there might not be a beggar in England they saw to it that there were none among their own fellowship who were in want of the necessities of life.

Since the making of money was not an end in itself, but a means of helping the community, business activities were to be pursued in moderation. A man was not to become absorbed

in the pursuit of riches, but to keep atop of the world and its commerce. In this way he would not only have time to seek the real end of life, which is "to know the life that never ends," but loving others as well as himself he would not gain so much of this world's riches that they were injured in consequence. In the same spirit he would recognize the claims of those in his employment and would treat them with justice, awaking in them love rather than fear.

These early Quakers usually attacked visible evils and spent little time in moralizing on their causes. They did not write philosophical treatises on business morality, but laid down instead a few basic principles on which they thought the whole of one's life, including, of course, one's daily occupations, should be built.

"Let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay."

"So say and so do is the royal law of liberty in all your trading."

"Owe no man anything but Love."

A writer in the early part of the seventeenth century had tried to answer the question, How may a man with good conscience possess and use riches? He reminds men that they are but the stewards of God to obtain and use their riches according to His will, ready to forsake them if God will; "we must so use and possess the goods we have, that the use and possession of them, may tend to God's glory, and the salvation of our souls."[1]

Friends would have agreed to all this, but in practice they laid the stress on the formation of a Christian brotherhood in which no man by the use or possession of riches would do an injury or injustice to another, but each would be serviceable to God and to his fellow man.

[1] *The Cases of Consciences*, M. W. Perkins, London, 1632, p. 310.

CHAPTER IV

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY THEORY

WHEN the eighteenth century opened, the group of people known as Quakers were as a community very different from the joyous fellowship of the times of the Protectorate, and from the number of those who in Charles II's reign had been ready to suffer the loss of all material things for the sake of their belief. The Toleration Act, the death of most of the early leaders and the weakening effect of the long period of persecution all tended to make the Society of Friends be of the "quiet in the land," to desire to attract as little attention as possible, and to form a closely knit comradeship of those who followed a high ideal themselves but did not hope that the rest of the world would do so.

The sense of being members of a select body of believers was very strongly marked, and all earnest Friends placed much dependence on the expressed opinions of the special group to which they belonged. There was active criticism of each other's daily life, unfortunately more often fault-finding than appreciative. This arose from the feeling that all were members one of another and that the deviation of one from the path of righteousness reflected on the reputation of the whole Society. That this was true in a particular way was due to the peculiar dress worn by the stricter Friends. This garb was, for most, not, as it had been to George Fox, an effort to live simply for the sake of poorer brethren, but a kind of uniform to be worn as a testimony to their idea of truth.

On the whole the country and Irish Friends were much stricter and more exclusive than those in cities like London

and Bristol, in which the leading Friends both in business and in social life had more contact with people of other sects.

Because of this strong group sense, the formulation of any business ethics was, among Friends in the eighteenth century, undertaken rather by the group than the individual. There were, however, a few exceptions.[1]

Seventeenth-century Quakers usually included their remarks on conduct in economic affairs in a general dissertation on the right conduct of the whole of life. Of such a nature in the next century is David Hall's *Epistle to Friends in Great Britain and elsewhere containing Advice and Consolation.* The author was a Yorkshire schoolmaster of great repute in the Society, whose writings were widely distributed. Two of the sections in his letter are addressed respectively to Apprentices, and to Men and Maid Servants. He urges the apprentices to think that if they work hard, and learn their trade carefully, they will "in due time become honourable tradesmen out of their own bottom. . . . Therefore, dear children, continue faithful, have your dependency on Jacob's God, and He can raise you from the very lowest state, even from the dunghill to sit among princes." He begins his advice to the servants in these words: "My well-esteemed Friends, who are of orderly conversation, and religiously inclined, in the station of men-servants and maid-servants, be of good courage in the honest discharge of your duties to your masters and mistresses, and their children." As they persevere in virtue they will be a blessing to their masters and their families, and the truth will make them free. Journeymen are given the apostle's advice to the church in Rome, to be "not slothful in business, etc." They are told: "Be not too anxious about temporals, . . . and fear not that you shall ever want those three necessary articles, meat, drink,

[1] The writings of John Bellers, whose work belonged to both these centuries, will be considered in a later chapter on "Industrial Philanthropy."

and apparel. . . . The truth ever teacheth all tradesmen, who mind its dictates, to keep within the bounds of their own stocks and capacities. Be sure to follow this your sure guide and you'll do well." The advice to masters is so to "behave themselves to their servants with such prudent moderation on all accounts, as becomes our holy profession."[1]

Characteristic of the change which had come over the expression of religious feeling by all sects, this reserved and moderate advice is very different from the outbursts of George Fox one hundred years before. Yet the same principles of service for others, of walking in the light of truth, and of being moderate in the conduct of business are found in both. Another schoolmaster, who wrote earlier in the century than David Hall, was Hugh Turford; his little book, which was a favourite manual of Friends in their Quietist period, was published in 1702. It is called *The Grounds of a Holy Life*, and an addendum to the main treatise is entitled "A Trial of Christianity from the life and nature of Christ and true Christians, with a description of true Godliness and the way by which we may conform our lives thereunto." In it Turford takes five of the commands of Christ and comments on them. The last with which he deals is, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." He says: "Were the understandings of all who are called Christians enlightened to see themselves as they are or had they but hearts to prove themselves by this Christian rule, measure themselves by this straight line, weigh themselves in this equal balance, the following sorts of men and women, with many others, would no more pass for true Christians in God's account, than clipped and counterfeit money when it came in the balance would in men's accounts. As first, all such who in suits of law by perverting justice or other subtle contrivances, possess themselves

[1] *Epistle to Friends*, D. Hall, London, 1754, pp. 13, 15, 17, 27.

of houses, lands, or goods, that they have no right unto. Secondly, all such who by violent robbing or private stealing take that which is not their own. Thirdly, all such who detain the wages of the hireling or grind on the necessities of the poor, by beating down the value of their labours till they cannot live thereby. Fourthly, all such who in trade or dealing use light weights, short measure or any other kind of deceit. Fifthly, all such who cast their burdens on other men's shoulders and go free themselves. Sixthly, all such as either give or take bribes to effect things that are not right. Seventhly, all such who take wages to serve lord or master, and are not faithful to their trust. Eighthly, all such as make contracts and perform not the same or engage themselves by promises and have no regard to their word. Ninthly, all such who by evil reports, whisperings or backbitings, sow the seeds of strife, create prejudice, or quench charity. None of these abide in the doctrine of Christ, none of these do as they would be done unto, though they bear a Christian name they are strangers to a Christian life, they live not under Christ's government; they are not swayed by a sceptre of righteousness; and so are not God-like."[1]

This is all negative rather than positive, but it is interesting that he places unjust wages third in his list of evils, and that though he refers to insincerity in appliances and in methods of carrying on trade, he has no reference to bargaining nor to the problem of the fixed price. Perhaps in a city like Bristol, where he lived, Friends had already had some influence in these directions. There was quite a colony of well-to-do Quaker merchants there, and ten years later one of them, Benjamin Coole, published a book bearing more directly on trade. It is the first Quaker writing, so far as I know, which is written from the point of view of a man who was himself a

[1] *The Grounds of a Holy Life*, H. Turford, London, 1782, pp. 131–3.

leader in industry, and which is mainly concerned with the relation between trade and religion. It was written by one who was evidently not a strict Friend, and who took part in public life, as far as he was able to do so. We find his name among those in the brass industry who presented a petition to Parliament against the importation of foreign brass in 1711. He was, with other Friends, one of the founders of the Bristol Brass Company, which has had an unbroken history for over two centuries. He was also one of those who established the Bristol Friends' Workhouse. His tract is called "Miscellanies, or Sundry Discourses concerning Trade, Conversation, and Religion: being the advice of a father to his children, on these subjects, also Religion and Reason united." Even from the title one can tell he was no typical eighteenth-century Quaker of the narrower sort, for the Quietist Quaker would not have united religion and reason. Yet the following from his *Discourse on Inspiration* shows that he knew for himself something of the Inner Light. He says of inspiration: "'Tis an inward breathing, an inward heat, warmth, or reviving which comes upon men (that are piously waiting for it) sometimes suddenly and powerfully breaking through all obstructions, giving men a much clearer sight, and understanding of the things of God and of religion than they commonly have at other times; raising in their minds a greater degree of love and desire after spiritual enjoyment than at other times; filling them with a greater abhorrence of all manner of vice than at other times; . . . rendering the doctrine and precepts of Jesus Christ more familiar and acceptable than at other times."[1] He is very cautious and matter-of-fact in his advice to his children; he tells them he has always avoided those things that had a tendency to popularity, but not so far as to embrace a base

[1] *Miscellanies*, B. Coole, London, 1712, p. 56.

neutrality in cases of dispute, nor to prevent him being charitable to the poor; they are to go through the world "without making a noise or rattle in it." The character of an honest and just trader is preferable to that of a "sharp and witty one," for an ingenious and politic trader is apt to be insincere, and people fight shy of such a man. Yet it is not well to be too easy-going, for such are preyed upon by others and become more necessitous than they already have been. "For some men are like Harpies, . . . if therefore in the way of your business you should meet with such unawares, get quit of them with all speed, keep no running or open accounts with such; rather lose a little to close accounts with them for ever and ever, than keep accounts open for the sake of a little money, for they have a design in all they do, and will not have your names in their books without picking something out of your pockets." His advice, "Take care that you keep an honest and sincere heart, an upright intention in what you say and do," is a development of George Fox's "So say and so do," and Coole adds to it a warning against backbiting and scandal. A sense of proportion is necessary in business: "Suffer not yourselves to be led away into a violent pursuit after a twopenny business, and let a matter of great consequence slip through your fingers; as I have often observed some people have taken more pains to catch butterflies, than is necessary for the taking of larks or of partridges." Special emphasis is laid on the necessity of supervising employees: "The old maxim is 'The master's eye makes the horse fat'; and you will find the contrary as true, that the want of the eye everywhere will be an occasion of poverty and want." Wives are to be trained to take the places of their husbands if absent, "and at other times you must not think it hard to stand by the stuff, when they [the wives] shall be either at their devotion, or upon any other civil or religious duty." One wonders whether he and his wife ever went out

together. He strongly condemns extravagance of any kind, or vanity in clothing, feeding, or household goods. Another advice about servants is like that of William Penn, but differently expressed: "Be sure you keep no more cats than you have mice to catch." In other words, do not keep too many servants nor horses, and he adds, nor change them too often. One thinks he would have regretted the development of his own brass manufactory when he says: "Great trades are not always best, but a little with contentment and good management is to be preferred."[1] Extreme caution, sincerity, attention to detail, and thrift, the qualities praised by Benjamin Coole, were probably those that helped to make many Quakers wealthy, and one expects that many of them found good management led to greater trade than their moderate inclination really desired.

About the middle of the century Sophia Hume, who was much interested in the colony of South Carolina, made a collection of the remarks of seventeenth-century Friends on various subjects, including those of "Getting and Spending Riches," and of "Trades and Merchandize." She has very little original to say, and most of her extracts are on the necessity of simplicity, especially in dress and furniture. A few Friends of this period issued pamphlets particularly connected with definite problems in trade and industry. Joshua Gee, a prominent London merchant, wrote a book which reached six editions and is still of importance for the information which it gives. Its title, which is a summary of the contents, indicates the trend of its author's thought: "The trade and navigation of Great Britain considered: shewing, that the surest way for a nation to increase in riches, is to prevent the importation of such foreign commodities as may be raised at home. That this kingdom is capable of raising within itself and its colonies,

[1] *Miscellanies*, B. Coole, pp. 6–10, 14, 20.

materials for employing all our poor in those manufactures, which we now import from such of our neighbours who refuse the admission of ours. Some account of the commodities each country we trade with takes from us, and what we take from them with observations on the balance."[1] Gee also wrote *An Enquiry into the State of the Woollen Manufacture in Great Britain.* He died in 1730.

In the latter half of the century John Hustler, a woolstapler, a Quaker minister, and a leading citizen of Bradford, wrote several pamphlets in connection with Parliamentary bills in which he was interested. Of wider appeal was his pamphlet (published in 1767) discussing the policy of the bounty on the exportation of corn. He believed that the bounty was keeping up the price of provisions and was therefore causing the emigration of artisans to America, and encouraging tillage to the detriment of sheep-rearing and other branches of farming. He disapproved of the enclosure movement, and thought a number of small farms would support more people than a big one occupying the same area. To him the most important thing was to provide sufficient food at a reasonable price for the poor so that they would not have to emigrate. Much the same motives underlay a similar pamphlet issued in 1792 by Catherine Phillips, one of the most gifted Quaker ministers of either sex in the eighteenth century. She was the daughter and granddaughter of ironmasters in Shropshire, and late in life became the wife of William Phillips, who was engaged in the copper trade between Cornwall and South Wales. Catherine Phillips was essentially Quietist in her outlook, and deliberately limited her reading to religious books throughout the greater part of her life, believing that "by one gleam of heavenly light the understanding is opened into

[1] *Catalogue of Friends' Books*, J. Smith, London, 1867, pp. 836, 837.

natural things."[1] Yet when, as in this pamphlet, she turned to the consideration of a social problem she used her powers of observation and of reasoning. One is impressed by her grasp of detail as well as by her clearness of vision and by her sympathetic understanding of the needs of others. Her paper is called "Considerations on the causes of the high prices of grain and other articles of provision, for a number of years back; and propositions for reducing them." When Hustler wrote, the country was still able to produce enough corn for her population, but between 1767 and 1792 the number engaged in industry increased so rapidly that England began to need more foodstuffs than she could herself grow.

Catherine Phillips did not realize that this would be a permanent condition, but like Hustler she thought that emigration could be prevented by increasing the amount of food grown in the country and so lowering the cost of provisions. She asks for a candid perusal of her remarks, "although dropped from the pen of a decrepit old woman."[2]

She considers that although bad harvests are partly the cause of high prices, the dearness of provisions is increased by the large farmers, who hold over their stocks to raise the price still farther. These rich farmers are striving after the luxurious living of the wealthier classes, whilst the small farmers who are left are forced to live very poorly. Whereas formerly they could malt their own liquor, now the duty on malt prevents them doing so, and more is spent in public-houses in consequence. The poor can scarcely obtain cheese and meat, and by the export of certain products of the soil the price of others is raised. Good food is wasted by the quantity of flour used for hair-powder and for starch, and of barley in the manufacture of spirits. There are too many dogs; and arable land is taken

[1] *Life of C. Phillips*, London, 1797, p. 9.
[2] *Considerations on High Price of Grain*, C. Phillips, London, 1792, p. ii.

up in the making of canals. In the houses of the rich much food is thrown away, and the custom of tea-drinking leads to the turning of arable land into pasture because more milk and butter are used in consequence. The greatest discouragement to tillage is the practice of tithing. (In this last statement the authoress must have had in mind the hundreds of thousands of pounds which had been distrained from Quakers.)

Among her positive suggestions for remedying these evils are recommendations to increase the number of small farms, to grow more carrots and other root crops, to distribute commons, etc., equitably (if they have to be enclosed), and to develop the fishing industry. She also suggests the building of granaries, and the cultivation of waste lands either by draining them or by planting them with trees. This essay by Catherine Phillips takes one out into a wider and more vital spiritual atmosphere than that which surrounds Hugh Turford's remarks ninety years before. It illustrates the change that was beginning to come over the Society of Friends before the end of the eighteenth century, which led them once more to look consciously outside their own borders; this gave rise to the great flood of philanthropy with which their names are associated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Once more they were hearing the cry of the oppressed, not alone in the individual cases with which they themselves came in contact, but also in the call of whole classes of sufferers whether in England or abroad.

The first and most important class to which they thus directed their attention was that of the slaves, and the man who had awakened the consciences of Quakers both in England and America on this subject was John Woolman. Although the problem of slavery affected Quakerism in these islands comparatively little, and though John Woolman himself was an inhabitant of New Jersey, I feel that some con-

sideration of his writings must be attempted in any survey of Quaker views on industry. He set himself no limits in his loving service for the oppressed of every nation. In Woolman's brief time in England during the summer of 1772 he was much depressed by the industrial conditions which he saw. Some of his essays were written with these things fresh in his mind. In his own life he was resolute against being entangled in "outward care and cumber." On more than one occasion he lessened his business that nothing might hinder him from the most steady attention to the voice of the True Shepherd. As a man of practical business experience, and as one who had read and travelled widely, he saw the problems that had to be faced and gave the solutions which he had found for himself. There is, of course, some overlapping in his various essays, but he expresses himself so clearly and logically that the main lines of his argument are easily grasped. "The Creator of the earth," he says, "is the owner of it. He gave us being thereon, and our nature requires nourishment, which is the produce of it. As He is kind and merciful we, as His creatures, while we live answerable to the design of our creation, are so far entitled to a convenient subsistence, that no man may justly deprive us of it." It is equitable that some should have greater possessions than others so long as they use them faithfully for the good of all; but those who cause men and animals to do unnecessary labour that they may themselves have money to spend on luxuries are acting contrary to the designs of their Creator.

We are God's stewards and must act according to His will. "When our will is subject to the will of God, and, in relation to the things of this world we have nothing in view but a comfortable living equally with the rest of our fellow creatures, then outward treasures are not further desirable than as we feel a gift in our minds equal to the trust, and strength to act

as dutiful children in His service who hath formed all mankind, and appointed a subsistence for us in this world. A desire for treasures on any other motive, appears to be against that command of our blessed Saviour, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures here on earth.' "

Although mankind now consists of many different families with different customs and ways of life, yet this does not give any one of them the right to do violence to men of another race, nor to force them to adopt a new way of life. If we consider ourselves better than they are, we must feel the privilege as a responsibility; in this argument Woolman is thinking in the first place of slavery and of the plea of slave-owners that they were doing a kindness to the negroes by bringing them out of barbarity into civilization. He goes on to apply the principle to all employers, recommending them also to labour with their hands that they may really know what they are asking their employees to do. If the rich man tried to understand how the poor live he would find that some of the things he considered as necessaries were not so at all. True sympathy is to put our souls in their souls' stead.

Woolman was grieved that the English Friends of his day were some of them engaging in various kinds of business and trade which were connected with slavery, and he thought they were too much inclined to follow each other's example instead of attending to the pure feeling of truth. He says that "to conform a little to a wrong way, strengthens the hands of such who carry wrong customs to their utmost extent; and the more a person appears to be virtuous and heavenly-minded, the more powerfully does his conformity operate in favour of evil-doers." Yet with his great ability to see both sides of a problem he recognized the difficulty of disentangling oneself from an evil custom by leaving an employment in which one had been brought up. To those who were in such circum-

stances he gave his sympathy and encouraged them to be faithful to the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Like the early Friends, Woolman believed that luxury led to oppression, but he was careful to distinguish between the possession of wealth and the desire for wealth; he thought that those who had wealth needed great gifts and much divine love to apply it rightly, and to make a right use of the power so gained. On the other hand, those who were provident simply with a desire for riches were as much to blame as those who wasted their substance on vain desires.

The craving for luxuries is at the root of many forms of oppression. Although the wish to save one's children from poverty is justifiable in itself, it should not mean the hoarding up of luxuries for them. Most of the necessaries of life have to be continually produced by men's labour and cannot be hoarded, so man is born to labour and each child should be taught a trade. Labour is healthy, and if a child has enough to start in life it is good for him to earn the rest by his own efforts. Further, if a child is brought up in luxury he loves more those things which money can give and he is not likely to be so sympathetic towards those who work for him. The true treasure to leave a child is to teach him to "labour for an establishment in Divine Love, where the mind is disentangled from the power of darkness."

High rents and high rates of interest are also responsible for the hardships of the poor, for farmers who are burdened by these cannot afford to pay good wages. If food were cheaper, wages could be lessened and so more people could be employed in useful occupations; and if the production of grain increased proportionately with the growth of the population, the price of food would not rise.

Woolman's remarks, although primarily applicable to colonial conditions, have a much wider appeal. His sense of

sympathy with the hardships of agricultural labourers was deepened by what he saw of their lot in England. The industrial conditions in Yorkshire were also distressing to him, particularly the dirt of the towns and the number of people even then employed in factories. He thought that it was harder for people to live in accordance with the truth in towns than in the country, for in cities people are mostly in branches of business into which "the Holy Spirit does not lead." His own life in a country town and his great love of animals and deep sympathy with them made him chafe against the artificiality of city life; when oppressed in spirit by the evils of the Yorkshire towns he wrote: "Under the weight of this exercise the sight of innocent birds in the branches, and sheep in the pastures, who are according to the will of their Creator, hath at times tended to mitigate my trouble."

He pointed out the connection between the wrong use of wealth and war. With the increase of treasures the desire to defend them grows. "Wealth is attended with power, by which bargains and proceedings contrary to universal righteousness are supported, and here oppression carried on with worldly policy and order clothes itself with the name of Justice, and becomes like a seed of discord in the soil; and as this spirit which wanders from the pure habitation prevails, so the seed of war swells and sprouts and grows and becomes strong, till much fruit are ripened. . . . Oh, that we who declare against wars and acknowledge our trust to be in God only may walk in the Light and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding great estates. May we look upon our treasures and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these our possessions or not. Holding treasure in a self-pleasing spirit is a strong plant which

ripens fast."[1] These words were written a dozen years before the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, but were not printed until 1793; yet as Adam Smith and John Woolman were contemporaries and both writers on economics, a comparison between the work of the two is interesting.

The Scotch professor's monumental work is concerned with political economy, the laws which govern capital and labour, and the use of money in agriculture, manufacture, and commerce. He scarcely touches on the morality of it all. John Woolman's simple essays are written by one to whom the ethical and religious are of primary importance and economic problems only one branch of the ethical. Woolman developed, even more than Penn had done, the principle enunciated by George Fox, that luxury was not really helpful to the true prosperity of a country; but Adam Smith thought that all manufactures were of value, whatever goods were produced. He praised frugality and condemned prodigality without considering the motives underlying them. Woolman, too, bases his discussion of prosperity on the relation between production and consumption, and does not lay so much stress on the balance of trade between countries as economists of the eighteenth century usually did. The chief goods brought overseas to the colonies then were slaves, molasses for making rum, articles of luxury, and gold, so he naturally thought it better for a country to be self-supporting as far as possible. The one seems to write in the atmosphere of the Royal Exchange or of some Government office, the other with a background of cornfields and of toiling peasants. Yet just because Woolman was relating economic life to the eternal principles which underlie all life, his words have a freshness and a vitality to-day which do not seem to be found in those of his

[1] *Journal, etc., of John Woolman*, ed. A. Gummere, London, 1922, pp. 403, 411, 419, 491. Reference may also be made to pp. 164, 308, 388, 395, 406, 466.

great contemporary. He was a prophet whose appeal for a state of society in which the weak should share equally with the strong was unheeded in an age dominated by ideas of *laissez-faire* and economic individualism, and his consideration of these questions from the religious standpoint was not understood by those who thought it possible to keep the one entirely apart from the other.

John Woolman's writings are the most outstanding contribution that Quakerism has made to the theory of the relation between morality and economics—a relation which was the basis of the Quaker's practice in trade, however feebly at times he maintained it.

CHAPTER V

CORPORATE ADVICE AND ACTION

IN the last four chapters some account has been given of the writings of individual members of the Society of Friends on subjects relating to the principles underlying business and industry. We must now consider the contribution of the Society as a community, both in theory and practice.

"The whole fabric of medieval civilization rested upon a religious basis. The regulation of every activity of secular life was regarded as a matter to be pronounced upon by the Church. In this way, the universally accepted ideas of commercial men and of people generally of the time were ideas founded upon a religious basis."[1] Allowing for a difference in the meaning of the word "church," this statement is also true of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Quakerism. At the root of its belief lies the principle that those who profess to be guided by the Inner Light must put their theory into practice, and must show its influence in every part of their lives. As soon as any organization sprang up among the followers of George Fox, the leaders and later the meetings themselves gave detailed advice on Christian practice. They formulated no canon law, but shared with their brethren the guidance in these matters which they believed they had had from God.

The first general statement on social practice made by Friends was that issued from a meeting at Balby, Yorkshire, in 1656. A postscript says: "Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule to walk by, but that all with

[1] *Economic Effects of Reformation*, p. 5.

the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in the light walking and abiding these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."[1] Unfortunately a later generation of Quakers departed in practice from this; they continued to give advice on general principles, but also took vigorous disciplinary action against all delinquents. Probably partly as a reaction against a group of Friends who had strong individualistic ideas, the main body swung in the opposite direction and tended to rely on the organization to decide matters on which they thought Friends had a "peculiar testimony."[2] Margaret Fox feared that the liberty of the individual was being infringed by so much stress being laid on minor details, such as dress. William Penn, however, was one of those who justified the stricter discipline by making a distinction between the civil and more distinctly religious functions of the Society. "To keep the necessitous, . . . to reconcile differences, . . . to take care of births, marriages, and burials; in fine, to prevent, rebuke, and restore disorderly walkers. . . . Here is nothing requisite to be believed as an article of faith . . . or anything proposed as an end or service for our men's and women's meetings, that can reasonably admit the raising of such a scruple of conscience, since the things proposed are duties that all civil societies, as well as church fellowships, agree in, as requisite to the support of the reputation of fellowships and societies."[3] Quakers, in practice, included in the phrase "disorderly walking" obvious moral lapses as drunkenness and theft, and also any deviation from the high standards which their leaders had inculcated of integrity and honesty in every department of life, and from that "simplicity" which was appropriate to those who believed in the equality of all men in the

[1] *Letters of Early Friends*, ed. J. Barclay, London, 1841, p. 282.
[2] See *Authority in the Society of Friends*, E. Grubb, 1927.
[3] *Works* W. Penn, II. p. 775.

sight of God. The sense of unity, which made any personal lapse seem a stain on the standard of truth to which the whole Society bore witness, strengthened their desire to purge it from wrong-doing.

It will be necessary first to review the advice on business morality given officially from time to time by the Society in England, and then to take some of the more detailed regulations made in various parts of England and Ireland for the carrying out of these recommendations. Illustrations will be given also of the disciplinary action taken against individuals who did not conform to the recognized standards.

The Balby letter of 1656 advised "that all Friends that have callings and trades, do labour in the thing that is good, in faithfulness and uprightness; and keep to their yea and nay in all their communications; and that all who are indebted to the world endeavour to discharge the same, that nothing they may owe to any man but [to] love one another."[1] A few years later George Fox elaborated the same points in his long epistle, *The Line of Righteousness*, which was of an official nature.

After the establishment of the Yearly Meeting in London certain rules of discipline were agreed upon, one of which was "Concerning trading." It still has a place in the latest book of Christian Discipline issued by English Friends. "Let Friends and brethren in their respective meetings watch over one another in the love of God and care of the gospel; particularly admonishing that none trade beyond their ability nor stretch beyond their compass; and that they use few words in their dealings, and keep their word in all things, lest they bring through their forwardness, dishonour to the precious truth of God."[2]

Such advice was found to be even more necessary when

[1] *Letters of Early Friends*, p. 281.
[2] *Christian Practice*, London, 1925, p. 108.

persecution ceased; accordingly, in 1688, after James II had issued his Declaration of Indulgence, the Yearly Meeting advised its members to have a care of the use made by them of the liberty which they had thus obtained: "To use this liberty as the name of God may be honoured by it, and not as occasion taken by any because of the present freedom to lâunch forth into trading and worldly business beyond what they can manage honourably and with reputation among the sons of men, and that they may keep their word with all men, and that their yea may prove yea indeed, and their nay may be nay indeed for whatever is otherwise cometh of the evil one. And such who make themselves guilty by thus dishonouring God and the holy profession of His name and truth, such are for judgment by the truth, and the judgment of truth ought to be set over them, that the truth and those that abide and walk in it may be clear of their iniquities."

The growth of the movement towards severe censure of defaulters is evident in this advice, and is certainly connected with the fear that the good reputation which the Society had already had for business integrity should not be maintained. Like Stephen Crisp, George Fox, and others, Ambrose Rigge had seen this danger as early as 1678, and sent a warning "to be dispersed among professors of the truth only," and "to be read in true fear and reverence in all meetings." He says that he fears that some who have trusted men because they were Quakers have already had reason to repent that they did so, but "they who still retain their integrity to the truth and life of righteousness manifested, can live with a cup of water, and a morsel of bread in a cottage, before they can hazard other men's estates to advance their own." Many who had called themselves Quakers had not kept alive in their hearts the living experience for which Quakerism stands, and Friends had, as a body, to struggle hard to maintain the high standards of

business morality in which they believed. The course taken by some of the backsliders is vividly described by Ambrose Rigge. Having borrowed some capital and given apparently good security, a man is not contented with a little house and a small trade, so he borrows more and lives in greater style, "launching presently into the strong torrent of a great trade." If he succeeds he does so at the risk of ruining others, but if he fails he not only ruins himself and others, but also brings reproach on the truth which he professes. The honest, upright, and humble mind, on the other hand, knows how to be content and never wants a sufficiency. "For He that clothes the lilies, and feeds the ravens cares for all who trust in Him, as it is at this day witnessed, praises to God on high; and that man hath no glory in, nor mind after superfluous or needless rich hangings, costly furniture, fine tables, great treats, curious beds, vessels of silver, or vessels of gold, 'the very possession of which,' as saith the ancient Christian Clemens Alexandrinus, 'creates envy.' "[1] The necessity of bringing up children simply, even if the parents have wealth, is then set forth; the letter ends with an appeal to the various meetings to appoint honest and faithful Friends to reason with those that are beginning to live carelessly and beyond their means. Though written by an individual, a paper such as this one was often accepted as the concern of the Society as a whole; even as late as 1745 the Irish National Meeting[2] recommended its members to read Ambrose Rigge's *Warning*.

London Yearly Meeting was itself alive to the connection between speculation and the love of luxury. Early in the eighteenth century it reprinted part of George Fox's *Line of Righteousness*, and in 1724 the epistle contained a paragraph which probably reflected the way in which Friends as well as

[1] *Life & Works*, A. Rigge, London, 1710, pp. 233–40.

[2] The meetings for Friends from all parts of Ireland were held in Dublin in May and November, and were called either National or Half-Yearly Meetings.

others were caught in the maelstrom of speculation, of which the South Sea Bubble is the best-known example. Earnest desire was expressed that "all Friends everywhere, be very careful to avoid all inordinate pursuits after the things of this world by such ways and means as depend too much upon the uncertain probabilities of hazardous enterprises, but rather labour to content themselves with such a plain way and manner of living as is most agreeable to the self-denying principle of truth which we profess and which is most conducive to that tranquillity of mind that is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world." As the century advanced, advice like this was frequently given in the annual letter. The Society in its corporate capacity was inclined to rest on what the early leaders had said, rather than to think out new implications of the faith more suited to the changing times.

Yet in 1753 a positive plea is made: "Let us . . . constantly dwell under a truly conscientious and religious concern, that in all our dealings among men we be strictly just and honest and that the whole course of our conduct and conversation in this world may demonstrate, that we are indeed and in truth the sincere and humble followers and disciples of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ."

By the end of the century many of the leading Friends had become wealthy, and there was not so much stress laid on simplicity. The epistle of 1788 contains a call to awaken such as are infected with the spirit of covetousness and are pursuing a delusive portion of the world "at the expense of their souls' interests. But were all thus awakened what place would be found for extensive schemes in trade, and fictitious credit to support them? To mix with the spirit of the world in the pursuit of gain would then be a subject of dread; and contentment under the allotment of Providence a sure means of preservation."

The cautious phraseology of official Quakerism in 1797 seems of icy coldness when compared with the warmth of George Fox's words on the same subjects. The epistle of that date says: "We do not condemn industry; which we believe is not only praiseworthy but indispensable. It is the desire of great things, and the engrossment of the time and attention from which we desire that all our dear Friends may be redeemed. . . . We doubtless owe duties to ourselves and to our families, but we owe even our own selves to our all-wise, all-protecting and provident Creator." The spirit was there, even if the expression was stilted.

Irish Friends accepted the same doctrines as did the Society in England, but their organization was independent, and though they framed little or nothing new in the way of theory in these matters they were particularly energetic in the practical oversight of the business affairs of their members. Towards the end of the seventeenth century there had been a general movement among Friends in Ireland, in the North of England, and in Scotland to enforce a standard of simplicity by minute regulations about dress, and house-to-house inspection of furniture, etc. A very thorough survey of Friends' way of living was carried out in Ireland after 1692 under the leadership of Joseph Pike and William Edmundson, whose watchword in these matters was "plainness in speech, behaviour and apparel." In 1697 a quarterly meeting in Lancashire ordered "a further inspection be made into the concerns and business of Friends, even of the whole of our Society belonging to this meeting, to prevent all from concerning themselves too much in the things of the world to their own hurt, the evil example of others, and the lessening of the fame of our religion."[1] The same meeting later drew up a list of questions which the

[1] *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, Barclay, 3rd ed., London, 1879, p. 494.

visitors were to ask each person about his or her business. Bristol Friends also considered making an inspection, but apparently did not carry it out.

Friends in Ireland in 1702 ordered a "strict and diligent inspection into the condition and circumstances of all Friends."[1] To prevent them "falling into debts beyond what they have to pay" they were "to cast up their accounts debit and credit for the satisfaction of themselves and those concerned for their good which they may only show to one Friend or two of the meeting they belong to as may give Friends on occasion satisfaction therein."[2] That this advice was carried out is probable, because Dublin Men's Meeting about the same time decided that Ezra Thackera had undertaken too great a concern when he agreed to clear the River Poddle in Patrick Street, and shortly afterwards told Abraham Mayo that the "great wood" which he had taken was more than he could deal with. Even as late as 1786 a Surrey Friend was advised by his meeting to give up farming.[3]

The custom of holding a general inspection into the business affairs of members does not seem to have been frequent, but yearly the various meetings were expected to advise their members to be "just in their dealings, punctual in fulfilling their engagements, and to inspect the state of their affairs once in the year."

Much attention was paid to certain matters affecting the industrial activities of individual Friends. These were connected with the care over apprentices and poor Friends exercised by the community, and with the disciplinary action taken towards those who defrauded the Government, fell into debt or bankruptcy, or otherwise proved delinquents.

In the middle of the seventeenth century apprenticeship was

[1] National Meeting Minutes, 1702.
[2] Munster Province Meeting Minutes, 1704.
[3] *Inner Life, etc.*, Barclay, p. 498 *n.*

still the usual custom in England and Ireland, and though the system was greatly abused in the next century among the general public, it formed for the young Quaker a very valuable training for his adult life. When setting up the Quaker organization in 1668 and 1669 George Fox paid a good deal of attention to the arrangements about apprenticeships. As they refused to have anything to do with the parish or its officials, Friends needed to make their own schemes both for the training of apprentices and for the relief of the poor; indeed, the two were very closely connected, as the following from George Fox's *Journal* will show: "Being in London, it came upon me to write to Friends throughout the nation about putting out poor children to trades. Wherefore I sent the following epistle to the quarterly meetings of Friends in all counties: 'My dear Friends, Let every quarterly meeting make inquiry through all the monthly and other meetings, to know all Friends that are widows or others, that have children fit to put out to apprenticeships; so that once a quarter you may set forth an apprentice from your quarterly meeting; and so you may set forth four in a year in each county or more, if there be occasion. This apprentice, when out of his time, may help his father or mother, and support the family that is decayed; and in doing so all may come to live comfortably. This being done in your quarterly meetings, ye will have knowledge through the county in the monthly and particular meetings of masters fit for them, and of such trades as their parents or you desire, or the children are most inclinable to. Thus being placed out with Friends they may be trained up in truth; and by this means in the wisdom of God, you will take off a continual maintenance, and free yourselves from much cumber. For, in the country, ye know ye may set forth an apprentice for a little to several trades, as bricklayers, masons, carpenters, wheelwrights, ploughwrights, tailors, tanners, curriers, blacksmiths,

shoemakers, nailers, butchers, weavers of linen and woollen stuffs and serges, etc. And you may do well to have a stock in your quarterly meetings for that purpose. . . . This will be a way for the preserving of many that are poor among you, and it will be a way of making up poor families. In several counties it is practised already. Some quarterly meetings set forth two apprentices; and sometimes the children of others that are laid on the parish. You may bind them for fewer or more years according to their capacities. In all these things the wisdom of God will teach you by which ye may come to help the children of poor Friends, that they may come to support their families and preserve them in the fear of God. So no more, but my love in the everlasting Seed, by which ye will have wisdom to order all things to the glory of God. G. F., London, 1st of 11th month, 1669.'"[1]

These practical proposals of George Fox's by which an industrial training in youth was to be a substitute for the necessity of poor relief in old age probably had not a little to do with the reputation for business ability which the Society gained. They seem to have been very generally carried out, and in some meetings, funds still exist for providing fees for apprentices.

In 1701 the Irish National Meeting wrote to the Yearly Meeting in London that they had given their members the following advice with regard to apprenticeship: Friends' children are to be let mix with the world's children as little as possible, so that they might not be tempted to "affect their fashions; youth are to be brought up to honest labour and to be put to labouring trades, when fit for it." They are not to be given too rich a diet or drink; nor money, except by the consent of their master. If Friends want to apprentice their children to their own trades they must be careful to do so properly, and

[1] *Journal of George Fox*, Bi-cent. ed., II. p. 119.

"keep them close to their business, as a good means to humble their minds and greatly help their growth in the truth." Poor Friends are to put their children to honest, suitable trades and not apprentice them to merchants or to trades that require much money to start; for many have been ruined by trading beyond their means and abilities. That Irish Friends on the whole followed this advice may be inferred from a remark of Arthur Young's written eighty years afterwards, in which he comments favourably on the fact that Quakers did not hold trade in contempt nor seek to educate their sons to a position higher than their own, as so many others in Ireland did.

Rich Friends, of course, saw to the apprenticing of their own children. Margaret Fox's grandson at the age of nineteen was in Holland, where he had learned to speak French, Dutch, and Spanish and to understand the Dutch way of book-keeping, but he had to be in service to a master until he came of age. His parents paid forty pounds a year for his diet, washing, and lodging, besides other expenses.[1]

Some examples from the records of various meetings will show how George Fox's suggestions were carried out for those whose parents could not afford the necessary fees. A few days before Fox wrote his letter, Peel Monthly Meeting (in London) had made arrangements similar to his, and a couple of months later they appointed two Friends "to take care that all legacies given to Friends in this quarter be brought to the public stock and such to be preserved for the setting forth of apprentices and other uses of the church and recorded in a book."

Dublin Men's Meeting in February 1678 minuted that "Margaret Atkinson [is] to bid her sons Henry and John to come to the next men's meeting in order [to be put] to a

[1] From an unpublished letter from Mary Lower to M. Fox (in the collection at Friends House).

master". Six weeks later we hear, "The matter about putting John Atkinson son of Margaret Atkinson apprentice to Samuel Studdart is agreed upon and concluded." The terms were that the boy was apprenticed for seven years and one year service, Margaret Atkinson to give Samuel Studdart £3 and to put her son in sufficient apparel. The treasurer of the meeting gave Margaret the fee from "Friends' account." Sometimes the boys ran away and then the apprenticeship fee had to be returned. George Fox thought it worth while to write a special letter to Friends to see that all apprentices faithfully served out their times and did not "buy out their times without the consent of their parents or guardians; or in want of them to advise with the monthly meetings." Fox saw the educative value of apprenticeship. "For youth if they be let loose are like wild asses, and wild heifers, . . . youth should be kept under a bridle and restraint, and be nurtured and trained up in the fear and wisdom of God."[1]

In one of the Dublin Men's Meeting books is a list of the eleven apprentices for whom fees were paid between 1717 and 1721. Only one was a girl; in six cases Friends provided clothing, as well as the fees, which varied from £1 to £6. A large city meeting like Dublin could find sufficient masters for those who wanted work, but in the country messages had to be sent from meeting to meeting. Perhaps this was why George Fox suggested the quarterly rather than the monthly meeting as the basis of his apprenticeship system, for it covered a much wider geographical area. In Munster in 1697 Cork Friends wrote that they wanted apprentices for a worsted comber and a shoemaker; in 1705 for a nailer. County Tipperary Friends in 1706 asked other Munster Friends for an apprentice for wool-combing, and two years later one for a saddler. Sometimes the boys were especially recommended; in 1694 Cork minuted

[1] *Epistles*, G. Fox, p. 310.

that "Robert Main's son aged 14 years writes well and well improved in Arithmetic also Grissell Smyth's son aged 15 years writes pretty well and has learned Rules and Practice, are to be put to prentice to trade, if any Friends want such let them inform next Province Meeting."

More than fifty years afterwards, Benjamin Holme, writing to Quaker children, says: "And if any of you should want to be put out to trades, if you are honest and peaceable, and careful to speak the truth, and to make good improvement of your time while you are at school, so that the Master can give a good account of you, his good recommendation may be a means to help several of you to good places."[1]

The meeting did not consider its responsibilities over when the indenture was signed. It settled disputes between master and apprentices, and dealt equally with a runaway boy or a cruel master. Cork Men's Meeting in 1711 advised that apprentices and servants were to be discouraged from walking abroad on "idle days"[2] or first-day evening, but their masters were to make arrangements to let them take the air at other times. In the same place their seats in meeting were also arranged; young apprentices sat in the gallery (but not among the scholars, who also sat there), while those in their last year of apprenticeship were allowed to sit downstairs. The hours of work were very long; they had often to sleep in the shop and might be made to work from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. or even longer.

From Sussex Quarterly Meeting we learn that some of the apprentices were grateful for what was done for them. "Margaret Robinson is apprenticed to Mary Grafton. She having been herself apprenticed for ten pounds, in grateful sense of Friends' love and the blessing of God on her industry,

[1] *An Epistle of Tender Counsel*, B. Holme, London, 1749, p. 10.
[2] That is holy days, like Christmas Day.

took Margaret Robinson free. This good example is worthy of imitation of all good people."[1]

The Irish National Meeting in 1705 ruled that masters were not to prevent apprentices setting up in the same town as themselves. William Stout, of Lancaster, explains that it "was a practice much then used" for a young man just setting up in business to invite the custom of his master's and of his neighbours' clients; "but," he adds, "by me always detested as being contrary to the golden rule."[2]

A certain Thomas Atkin issued a broadside in 1660, and sent a copy of it to the King; it is called, *Some reasons why the People called Quakers ought to enjoy their Meetings peaceably*. Three of his reasons are: "Because that in their meetings they take care for the poor, that there may not be a beggar amongst them; therefore they ought to meet. . . . Because that in their meetings they take order, and provide for such poor people as are amongst them, who are out of work, by setting their families to work when work is scarce, and by giving them better wages than shopkeepers will; therefore they have right to meet. . . . Because that in their meetings they take care to provide for such young traders who want stock by lending them certain sums of money (according to their capacity who are to use it) for a time freely; therefore they ought to meet." It is interesting that Friends were helping each other in these ways ten years before the establishment of the regular meetings for conducting the Society's affairs; and also that they were already credited with paying good wages.

George Fox issued in 1660 a long letter to the quarterly meetings explaining the functions of the men's and women's meetings; he suggests that all legacies given to any particular meeting should be used for the setting up of poor Friends'

[1] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, XXI. p. 24.
[2] *Autobiography of William Stout*, ed. J. Harland, London, 1851, p. 21.

children in their trades. He had recommended that money left to quarterly meetings should be used for apprenticeship fees, and that left to particular meetings for those who had finished their apprenticeship. When a young man received a gift of this nature, it would be accompanied by practical advice from older Friends; indeed, there was much supervision both of the amount of trade carried on and also of its nature.

A number of illustrations of this may now be given. They show the various ways in which the group helped the individual either to start in business or to tide over some financial crisis. Though they are mostly found in the Irish records, I think that English Friends were probably as active in this way, but did not minute such deeds as Irish Friends did.

London Yearly Meeting in 1692 "advised that all Friends that are in trade and have not sufficient of their own to answer the trade they aim at, be very cautious of running themselves into debts without advising with some of their ancient and experienced Friends among whom they live and more especially such trading as hath its dependence upon sea adventures." The risk of taking a part share in a cargo going to foreign parts was, of course, very great. From Quaker journals we learn how frequent misadventures were; the ship might be wrecked, or taken by a privateer, or captured by the enemy in time of war. Another risk is shown in a letter which Munster Friends had in 1700 from Philadelphia, telling of the damage done by young merchants and factors of cargoes who went there and then embezzled the money which rightly belonged to the owners of the cargo. The letter also complained that ships were often overcrowded and were the means of bringing diseases to other lands. Cork Friends had had more than once to help with the provisioning of emigrant ships which had called at Cove,[1] so they brought the matter before the National Meeting.

[1] Now Cobh (called Queenstown from 1849 to 1922).

It decided that no Friend was to be a factor of a cargo without leave of his meeting, and that shipowners were to provision their ships properly and not overcrowd them with either goods or passengers.

Peel Meeting in 1676 sent an inquiry to the Monthly Meeting of Westminster about the widow of Andrew Carter and appointed a committee who, on receiving the report from that meeting, were to "do as in wisdom they shall be guided" "touching the gathering together some moneys towards the putting of the widow of Andrew Carter into a trade for the maintenance of herself and family." Dublin Men's Meeting in 1699 gave Richard Lloyd £3 to start in business, whilst Cork in 1681 lent John Hartford £4 on bond for six months to buy materials for his trade. Dublin Men's Meeting in 1695 bought a loom to lend to J. Baggiley, and shortly afterwards gave John Ashton £5 to buy leather, "which he took very ungratefully." The same meeting in 1732 lent a glover £3 so that his goods would not be distrained for rent.

The Irish National Meeting in 1702 recorded a complaint that linen and woollen goods were made slightly and so were of little service to the wearer thereof. Friends were accordingly told to "make and sell substantial goods and good for the use designed in goodness, weight, and measure." This probably brought the Quakers into good repute, for in 1719 we hear from the same source that "the Trustees of the Linen Manufactury have money to give out or lend for promoting the same and . . . several who come to our meetings do frequently attend them in order to get some of the said money into their hands, and this meeting being under a concern that truth and Friends may be reproached by any such persons not performing or answering the trust reposed in them, it's desired that each monthly meeting be concerned where they know of any such to desire them to advise with the monthly meeting before

they engage in such undertakings, and that all Friends be careful who they recommend to the said trustees for any employment under them." At this time there was no official list of members; outside the circle of those who transacted the affairs of the Society there was a large and very indefinite following who identified themselves with Friends in varying degrees. Care had therefore to be exercised to prevent people posing as Friends merely to get money.

Friends were expected to take the advice of others if they wished to settle in a different locality. When young men wished to emigrate, great efforts were made to find suitable openings for them, and money was sometimes given them by the home meeting to enable them to go. In one such case the recipient, twenty years later, returned £20 from Pennsylvania to the meeting which had helped him. Cork Men's Meeting in 1698 recorded that Charles Sindersby wanted to go to England because he could not well be supplied with timber for his trade, and in 1722 Joseph Poole accepted the advice of the same meeting against going to Lisbon with a "parcel of goods and linen manufactury." Moate Men's Meeting in 1722 minuted: "There being some Friends' families lately settled at Tullamore from within the compass of other monthly meetings and this meeting being under a concern for their welfare, therefore Benjamin Parvin and John Russell are to speak to them and enquire whether they have brought certificates of their conversations[1] with them, from whence they came." If they had not done so they were to get them. As by the Act of Settlement, movements of those without visible possessions had been restricted, Friends were in this way only carrying out a familiar system in a spirit of friendly interest and fellowship.

Before the days of fire insurance and, indeed, until one

[1] Conversations is here used to mean "manner of acting in common life."

hundred years ago, it was possible to obtain legal permission for the issue of a brief to collect funds at any or every place of worship for the sufferers from any catastrophe. Even in the Quaker meeting-house the notice had to be given and the congregation asked to remember the brief. Some of these official briefs still exist among Quaker archives, but pursuant to their policy of helping poor Friends themselves and not asking for outside help, Friends made their own appeals for those of their members who had suffered great loss. The nature of these documents may be understood from an example found in the records of London Yearly Meeting in 1672. "Friends' advice for the present aid and supply of George Embree who hath lately had a great loss by fire is that a collection be made amongst Friends in the counties following, to wit, Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Essex, Middlesex, Bristol, and Hertfordshire, and that William Penn and Francis Rogers do draw up a letter to send to the several counties before-mentioned." The letter began as follows: "Dear Friends and Brethren, Our love is to you all in the unchangeable truth of God which preserves to Him, and in true tenderness to and fellow-feeling for one another; the occasion of this is the dismal calamity and great loss it hath pleased the Lord to visit and exercise our friend George Embree of Southampton withal, even to the consuming of both house, household stuff, convenient places and utensils for his trade who is a soapboiler by a very sudden fire that happened in the said town; now since he hath lost . . . all that he had, . . . we are constrained by God's merciful truth to compassionate his sad condition, . . . [and] to recommend unto your tender and charitable consideration the whole matter, that as the Lord shall open any of your hearts to commiserate his distressed condition so to speedy a contribution in the several counties herein expressed [that] he may be assisted in

such a manner as may enable him to maintain his family which has always been given up to entertain Public Friends and serve God's truth." The letter concludes by explaining that London Friends had been omitted from the appeal because they had to provide for a similar case in their own suburbs.[1]

The sense of fellowship which made Friends care for their own poor made them also forbid any Friend to go to law with another Friend. London Yearly Meeting in 1684 decided that "the choosing of arbitrators is proper in cases of differences about a man's property, but in differences about religious matters, as schism, etc., the rule of Christ is to be observed . . . the church being judge." In 1693 it laid down that "all difference happening in personal and temporal occasions [is] to be ended between the parties concerned or by persons to be equally chosen by them . . . or otherwise submitted to the monthly or quarterly meetings to whom they do belong to see a final end put thereto. And if any doubtful point in law be in the case then both parties advise with some able lawyer."

Much time was spent over these arbitrations, not at times without considerable bitterness and personal recrimination; but two hundred years ago people did not control the expression of their feelings as much as is now customary in "polite society."

Sometimes the dispute was a very simple one, as in the following award made in Ulster in 1689. "Whereas there hath been a difference depending between John Boyd and John Neale concerning a mare, of two pounds five shillings in price, and they having left the matter to the meeting, the meeting appointed us Nicholas Starky, Alexander Matthews, William Souldon, and John Hendron to hear and determine aforesaid difference; we do therefore award and order that the said John Boyd pay or cause to be paid unto the aforesaid

[1] London Yearly Meeting Minute Books, I. p. 5.

John Neale the sum of eleven shillings three pence sterling at two even and equal payments, that is, to pay one half at the next province meeting, and the remaining half at the province meeting next following, as witness our hands, John Hendron, Nicholas Starky, Alexander Matthews, William Souldon."

Outside arbitration was sometimes obtained. Dublin Friends were interested in various guilds, so in 1718 we find them recording that in the dispute between Patrick Henderson and Gabriel Shepherd about a wall, the wall was found to be Patrick's "by the Corporation of Bricklayers and Carpenters appointed by the Mayor to view the same."

One case of considerable importance arose out of Thomas Story's action at the time of the South Sea Bubble. The dispute was continued in print after the arbitration was over. Story was Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Company, which had to do with the sale of land in Pennsylvania and also with the shipment of stores thither. In July 1720 Story had about £8,000 of this company's money in hand and was persuaded by a certain James Hoskins, a Friend, to lodge it in the Bank of England. Story said that he did not know how to open an account with the Bank, so Hoskins undertook to do it for him, but lodged the money in his own name. He then spent part of the money on South Sea Stock at 980 per cent. and 1,000 per cent., but when the stock fell he absconded, afterwards claiming that Story owed him £400. Story had to ask the Pennsylvania Company to take his own private estates in the colony to cover the deficiency in his accounts, whilst Hoskins declared that this land was not worth as much as Story said it was. The whole matter was referred to twelve arbitrators, seven of whom decided for Story and five for Hoskins; leading Quaker business men in London were on both sides, but certainly Story's character suffered less than that of Hoskins, who was after-

wards disowned.[1] There was a good deal of publicity about the whole matter which did not lessen the character Friends were already getting of being fond of making money. Possibly one reason why they were able to make it was that by this method of arbitration they saved lawyers' fees and law costs.

Whilst Friends in this way attempted to establish right relations between members of equal social rank, they also supervised the relations between masters and servants. Advice was frequently given about the religious oversight of the young people of the household, whether apprentices, men-servants, maidservants, or children of the family.

Those in service were often recommended to be faithful in the performance of their duties, and to be respectful to their masters and mistresses. Change was not encouraged; the Quaker maidservants in London in 1672 were told that if they wanted to leave their places they must first consult the monthly meeting.[2] In an epistle sent out by the Six Weeks Meeting in London in 1698 it was advised that "Friends be careful to perform all their promises, obligations and contracts, and make payments of just debts, and not tediously delay or keep back the hire of labourers and manufacturers beyond the time appointed for payment and thereby give them just cause of complaint of great injury and oppression." Usually, however, the just and punctual payment of wages would be included in the advice about the keeping of promises and the payment of debts. Special problems relating to wages were occasionally brought to the notice of Irish Friends. In 1678 Munster Province Meeting appointed Friends to "speak with Friends of the clothing and spinning trades that they take care in all their dealings with spinners and other workfolk to pay either in

[1] Several pamphlets on this subject, said to be by E. Bockett, are in the Library at Friends House.

[2] "An exhortation and admonition of the Friends and Brethren in London chiefly to all maidservants," London, 1672.

money for their work or sure goods as they shall fully agree for beforehand and to desire if they give goods they may not be valued above the current price."[1] This reference to the truck system from Munster is interesting, for at the time a lady was still living near Cork who is said to have, by an unsparing use of the system, built a castle at the cost to herself of only fourpence.

Other customs connected with employment were also condemned by the Irish Friends; such were described by them as "Tradesmen and Journeymen drinking of entering and penny, reckoning pots, . . . padale with combers, heelblock with shoemakers, footale with smiths and several such terms and customs."[2] The very names suggest too much conviviality at the alehouse or tavern.

General advice was and is given annually in all meetings about the advisability of making wills in time of health; as Aberdeen Monthly Meeting put it in 1714, "that Friends be earnestly exhorted to settle their latter wills and testaments tymously and their outward business so that they may be prepared . . . to answer their great Master's call whenever it comes. . . ." In a number of meetings, books were kept in which the wills were entered, and also the inventories of the stock, utensils of trade, and household goods of deceased members. A committee was charged with the duty of seeing that the executors carried out their work justly. Oversight and advice were followed by expostulation with those who professed to be Friends but did not act up to the standard which the Society wished to maintain among its members. Some of the early minutes give an amusing variety of cases, but after 1700 most meetings only entered in their minutes instances in which well-recognized testimonies were contravened.

[1] Similar advice was given in Dublin in 1706.
[2] National Meeting Minutes, 1695.

In 1681 Dublin Men's Meeting ordered that "Joseph Thomas is to keep a pair of scales in his mill and weigh corn in and out to avoid scandal;" he expressed his sorrow "for wasting of corn and malt in my mill, and that pigs, swine and horses had been suffered to eat out of the sacks and hopper though I have not allowed of it." Journeys were long and difficult in those days, and the hardworking country Quaker found it very inconvenient to leave his farm or business to go to the capital for a week or more of meetings at the time of the Yearly or the National Meeting. It seems to us a reasonable desire on his part to use the visit for buying in fresh goods or for selling some of his cattle; but talk arose in Dublin that Friends only came to trade, and so the National Meeting in 1683 decided that neither city nor country Friends were to carry on their trading during the time of the National Meeting. This decision cannot have been completely obeyed, for a few years later country Friends were "cautioned and advised not to bring cattle to Dublin at the time, or in the company of Friends removing to the Half-year's Meeting, but that such who have occasions of that kind do take a convenient time either before or after the said meeting that so no occasion may be given to Friends or others to think that these our religious meetings are for the management of outward or worldly concerns."[1]

As will be shown in another chapter, individual Friends suffered through believing it wrong to take an oath on any occasion. In 1696 a legal form of affirmation was obtained which could in certain cases be used instead of an oath. There was a long struggle within the Society itself to find an affirmation which all Friends would be satisfied to make use of; broadly speaking, those who were becoming wealthy and engaging in extensive business transactions were in favour of being content with the form already granted, whilst those who

[1] National Meeting Minutes, 1697.

wanted to tighten up the "discipline" desired a simpler form, which was not made legal until 1722. (Irish Friends, who were among the dissatisfied, did not get their Affirmation Act made permanent until 1746.) On the passing of the 1722 Act a special letter was issued from London cautioning Friends to be careful not to make a wrong use of the affirmation, now that all were enabled thereby "to follow their lawful occupations, trades and civil concerns, without let or hindrance on that account." The letter went on to warn them against defrauding the revenue, or being in any manner connected with the smuggling trade. The frequency with which such advice was given in the eighteenth century shows that it was a difficult matter for some traders wholly to avoid traffic in contraband goods. Quaker traders in Ireland were so much limited in action by the Navigation Act and other laws against Irish exports that there was little which they might export.

If Friends became aware that members or attenders of the meeting were defrauding the revenue, not paying their debts, or otherwise acting wrongfully, they expostulated with them, and if they did not themselves condemn their own doings, the meeting published a paper, which either expressed disapproval of the actions, or, in bad cases, declared that Friends were not in unity with the offender and disowned him to be of the Society. In most places a record of the disownments was kept and a few examples from these books will show the sort of case which occurred.

In 1704 William Braithwaite was disowned in Dublin for sending woollen drapery hidden in skins to England. In 1725 Abraham Robinson took cheeses out of a ship that was stranded by a storm, but he repented and apologized to his meeting; when he found that the owners was still alive he restored as many as he could. In 1732 Thomas Griffiths was disowned for importing tea by false package and false entry at the Custom

House in Dublin. In 1701 Cork Friends informed the collector of customs that Charles Sherborne was not a Friend although he attended meeting. He had been detected shipping prohibited goods to France by pretending that they were butter. By 1737 Benjamin Holme, in an epistle to Irish Friends, was able to speak of the great reputation and credit they had gained for making true entry of their goods at the Custom House, and discouraging all clandestine ways of "running" goods.

William Tuke, of York, a tea merchant, stood out consistently against trading in "run" tea, although half or three-quarters of the tea entering the country was smuggled until the duty was reduced in 1784 from 100 per cent. to 12½ per cent. Many Friends were not so scrupulous, and Tuke directed the attention of the Yearly Meeting to their inconsistencies. It advised the respective meetings to deal with the offenders and a number left the Society. The London Epistle of 1786 was able to say: "We observe with satisfaction, from the accounts received, that Friends are generally careful not to defraud the Government in any branch of the revenue, nor to deal in goods clandestinely imported." It gives, however, a warning against being accessory to such practices and the buying of these goods for private use.[1]

Great care was taken by the Society to ensure that as far as possible Friends were punctual in paying their debts and in keeping their promises. The epistle of caution issued by the Six Weeks Meeting in 1698 says: "To our great grief we have found that some (especially of late times) who make profession of the worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ amongst us, have not had that due regard thereunto, and the honour thereof, as they ought, nor have been so careful, as becomes them, in the management of their affairs and trade in the world but have

[1] *Tea, etc.*, R. O. Mennell, 1926, p. 40, and Y. M. Epistle, 1786.

inconsiderately and unadvisedly over-charged themselves with debts, till they could not duly and justly discharge them, and by neglecting their affairs and trade and being too extravagant in their habits, furniture of their houses, and living too high, and above what their income would answer, and what becometh their profession; and thereby have hurt themselves. And for want of a due and timely inspection into the state of their affairs, or stopping when they have been sensible of their own inability, have gone on, till they have been under such straits and difficulties to satisfy their creditors' just demand in due time, that when they have come for money, to put them off have given them expectations; and sometimes (when pressed hard upon) made promises to pay within some time limited, and yet have not performed. And these things have been, and are attended with evil consequences, not only to the persons themselves, but greatly injurious to many others, and have been occasion of stumbling and offence, and have also brought dishonour to Truth, and a reproach upon us, and a scandal upon our holy profession and religion."

A number of suggestions which follow may be summarized.

1. All are given counsel to be careful not to launch out into trade, beyond what they can honourably and punctually answer and without injury to others.
2. Every one is to be careful to pay his debts as soon as they are due.
3. If any one does not do so he is to be admonished, first by one Friend, and then by two or three, and if they do not succeed, the matter is to be brought before the monthly meeting.
4. Accounts should be made up once a year.
5. If any one finds he is almost bankrupt he should consult two or three faithful Friends of his meeting.

6. A testimony is to be issued against any one who actually becomes bankrupt.
7. Monthly meetings are to appoint Friends in each meeting to see to these matters.

These recommendations seem to have been the basis of the custom of the Society during the eighteenth century, and probably took the place of the general oversight and inspection which had been exercised in some meetings previously.

We have seen in the case of Thomas Story how a man with a legal training engaged in important business transactions did not understand a bank account, so it is not to be wondered at that the ordinary country Quaker shopkeeper, or even some in a large way of business, got into financial difficulties through ignorance and lack of oversight of their accounts. Reading the journals of various Friends one realizes how very little capital was thought necessary to start a business then, and how readily a change was made from one trade to another.

Until the Affirmation Act, Friends had no legal redress as creditors, because they could not take an oath. Meetings helped those who were in difficulties in this way. Sometimes debts were collected for Friends at a distance, or the meeting would try to settle between the debtor and his creditors by means of arbitration. In 1688 Stockton Monthly Meeting wrote to a merchant, Nathaniel Wilmer, in London that he was acting unfairly towards the other creditors in not accepting the arrangement which had been made in the case of Richard Watson's bankruptcy. The quarterly meeting had succeeded in ensuring that Friends should "not be excluded by reason of their testimony against swearing; the obtaining of which privilege Friends accounted very well of; and when all this is done that thou should be the only man to exclude thyself, we are sorry for it." The letter goes on to say that they believe

Richard Watson will do his best to repay everyone in course of time.[1] At times of financial crisis in 1720 and 1726 special warnings were issued by London Yearly Meeting, and in 1771 it protested against "raising and circulating a fictitious kind of paper credit."[2]

Quakers have been criticized for disowning all their members who became bankrupt, and doubtless in the nineteenth century it was sometimes done in a formal and rather arbitrary manner, and mercy did not temper justice. Earlier, however, there was certainly a great deal of care taken to prevent bankruptcies as well as to help the bankrupts. When the final step of complete disassociation with the individual was taken by the Society it would probably be because the delinquent himself was not really attached to Quaker principles. If a man failed he could still continue to attend meetings for worship; if he evinced real sorrow and did what he could to pay what he owed he would after a time be again allowed to share in the conduct of the organization of the Society. Many who never failed in business were excluded from the monthly meetings until after the middle of the eighteenth century, when all such meetings were thrown open to all members. In practice there had probably been a good deal of leniency previously, for in 1739 the Irish National Meeting expressed its regret that some who had been insolvent had been given offices in the Society. Care was taken not to receive subscriptions from such people until they had repaid all that was owing by them, for their money could not "properly be deemed of their own."

The bankrupts themselves sometimes published apologies for their actions, intimating their desire to do justice to all. Amos Strettell was one of the leading Dublin Friends and most generous in lending money and helping others. He was so busy that he did not keep a sufficiently careful check on his

[1] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, XI. p. 53. [2] See p. 38.

financial affairs; when the crisis of 1720 came he was unprepared, and could not meet his obligations. The National Meeting representing the whole body of Irish Quakers raised £1,000 and paid the interest on it, to help him. His letter to his creditors is a most pathetic document; in it he says: "[I] can truly say I am more concerned for my creditors than myself for [I] shall not look on anything I can get my own until my debts are paid." He offered to go to prison if it were thought necessary. Friends continued to help him in various ways until his death a few years afterwards.

Edward Browne of Sunderland failed in 1729 from extravagance and other causes. He says in his paper of self-condemnation: "I am much grieved that any should lose by me; I can honestly say, more than at my own great losses and suffering . . ." He expresses his resolution to pay all his debts and continues: "I look upon my failure to be rather the effect of divine displeasure for my unfaithfulness in what the Lord for some years required of me, than the ill state of my affairs . . . therefore it is very just in Him, and I believe merciful too, to sweep all these things away from me, that I might trust in nothing but the living God." Browne moved to Cork, and Sunderland Monthly Meeting wrote to Cork Friends giving information about him and adding that if the merciful hand of God "hath been pleased to blot out his offences, his church and people is thereby led and induced to follow that great example. And therefore we, in great tenderness and affection, recommend him to your tender care and concern for and over him, that he may be faithful to that great and renewed visitation which hath prevailed with him thus to acknowledge his offences; that so his last days may be his best days is our very earnest desire and prayer for him."[1]

Perhaps in this examination of the Quaker attitude as a

[1] *Some Account of Edward Browne*, 2nd ed., Sunderland, 1842, pp. 11, 20.

community towards business morality we may at times have seemed on a level far below that of John Woolman or George Fox. Even as mountain peaks rise from the shoulders of the range yet are of the same kind of rock, so the visions of the leaders and the rather prosaic proceedings of the Quaker groups were alike based on the recognition of that of God in every man which should lead him to love his brother as himself and to strive to act sincerely and in accordance with truth in his daily life.

CHAPTER VI

MODERATION IN LIFE AND TRADE

As early as 1652 George Fox wrote to his friends, "Take heed of the world's evil ways, words, worships, customs and fashions."[1] Not only did the Quaker try to avoid the world's evil ways of bargaining, breaking promises, and other insincerities, but his trade was considerably moderated by his refusal to participate in customs and fashions which seemed to him inconsistent with the life of a Christian. Had the Society of Friends arisen now it would scarcely be superfluity of clothing and unnecessary additions to wearing apparel against which it would have protested, but in the period after the Restoration the extravagances of dress among those connected with the Court were notorious. The Quaker garb was at first plain but not unusual. Friends retained, however, the characteristic dress of the Puritan middle classes long after others had discarded it. It gradually became to them a symbol of separation from the world. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the attention paid to outward appearance and special details of dress detracted sadly from the ideal of simplicity for which Friends had originally pleaded. The broad-brimmed hat, the collarless coat, and the peculiar phraseology tended to be used by individuals as of religious significance in themselves, and time was wasted in the business meetings of the Society in discussions on details of dress which might well have been spent on more spiritual matters.

At first, however, the people principally affected by the belief in simplicity in dress were those tailors who became

[1] *Epistles*, p. 15.

Quakers. Gilbert Latey was one of the leading tailors in London at the time of the Commonwealth and Protectorate; when he became a Friend he gave up the making of fashionable garments and confined his work to the plain apparel which he thought consistent with Christian simplicity. His trade left him, and instead of having many employees it seemed as though he would have to become one himself. However, he persevered in his course, continuing to be respected and to have influence in Court circles although he no longer felt free to add ornaments to clothing. About 1660 he published a tract, "To all you tailors and brokers who lie in wickedness, and to all you tradesmen." Most of this consists of a call to repentance written in a diffuse and verbose style; the gist is found in one sentence: "You all are to mind the Light of Christ in your own consciences, and to be obedient to it, that with it you may be led out of all the evil of your ways and trades, and callings of what sort whatsoever."[1] Latey has a little to say about the special sins of tailors; he particularly mentions their habit of stealing goods from each other which seems to indicate a curiously low state of morality. He holds the tailors responsible for leading people into extravagance and pride through the invention of fashions which make men "look like apes and fools, that it is even a shame to see them." He considers the wearing of livery by servants another pernicious habit.

Another Friend tailor whose trials are recorded was John Hall, the father of David Hall the schoolmaster and writer. He "was often employed in the families of men of great note and circumstances and had in esteem and repute amongst them, being willing, capable and ready to gratify them in the modes, cuts, fashions and superfluities of the times, being himself at that time a youth gay and modish in apparel, sprightly and jovial in spirit, swimming as it were, with wind and tide

[1] *Life of G. Latye*, London, 1707, p. 37.

towards the profits and pleasures of this fading world, yet all along preserved from the gross enormities thereof." He became a Friend and was gradually led to give up making, or letting his servants make, anything of the nature of unnecessary adornments to clothing. He had a sudden attack of illness during a meeting and looked upon it as a judgment from the Lord for having put lace on women's dresses. "He was willing to lose all rather than his peace with the Lord; he freely turned his back on all that worldly interest, and Providence so favoured his conscientious care, that he got plain work and his wages increased and as he was faithful in a little, the Lord made greater things manifest unto him; for in the very families wherein in the time of his ignorance he had been light, airy, and wanton, he was now made to reprove vanity, and bear a living testimony to the everlasting God." Later in life "he kept an inn at Skipton for the space of thirteen years, and kept his authority nobly in the truth while in that place, not allowing drunkenness, singing, dancing, music, or excess in his house; but bearing testimony faithfully against intemperance, ruled well his own house, and kept it for necessary accommodation."[1] The conscientious individual tailor was well upheld in his defiance of custom by the Quaker organization. One of the first minutes passed by Leinster Province Meeting, after its establishment in 1670, was an order to Thomas Boale not to sell lace and ribbons. In 1676 and 1677 the National Meeting took the matter up and testified against "making and selling . . . things which truth will not allow of . . . such they deemed to be the merchandize of gold and silver lace, gaudy ribbons, silks, etc., all which kind of traffic several persons who had been concerned in, when they came to be of this judgment, did lay down for conscience sake."[2] George Fox had in 1671

[1] *Life of David Hall*, London, 1758, pp. 19–27.

[2] *Extracts from divers . . . testimonies of Friends*, S. Hume, London (about 1756), p. 80.

told the men's and women's meetings to appoint Friends to give advice in these matters, and when setting up these meetings in 1669 had indicated as one of their duties the assistance of such "as have left a calling, which they cannot for conscience sake follow;" adding, "do the best you can to help them and further them to employment, that they may labour in the thing which is good and be a blessing in the creation."[1]

In 1672 "it came upon" Gilbert Latey to write another paper, "something by way of caution and encouragement to such as were of the same trade that they might know the power of God to lead them out of superfluity, and be means to persuade and advise others therefrom . . . for which good end" a "paper was written by Gilbert; and being communicated to several Friends of the same trade, they were well satisfied with it, and desired it might be printed, and accordingly with Gilbert signed the same." The paper is an appeal to Friends who were more willing to "answer the world in making their clothes" than were the leaders; being still "under those burdens that many yet groan under and are not redeemed out of, as lace, ribbons, and needless buttons, altogether useless."[2] This is perhaps the earliest example we have of the way in which Quakers who were members of the same trade met together to consider the implications of their testimony in their special occupation. By order of the National Meeting fourteen Friend tailors met in Dublin in 1687 as they had done sometimes previously. They issued the following statement: "The concern and care that hath for several years been upon the spirits of Friends when assembled together at several half-year's meetings from which several testimonies have been given forth that all Friends might keep out of the vain and foolish fashions of the world; as to which fashions in apparel

[1] *Epistles*, p. 288.

[2] *Life of G. Latey*, compiled by R. Hawkins, 1821, pp. 54–7.

some that profess truth of our trade have not kept themselves so clear as we could desire, in making or cutting out some garments for Friends and their children; but have entered too much into such fashions as the people of the world have invented to the grief of the spirits of those that desire to keep to the first pattern which the truth brought us unto in the beginning. These things being under our consideration at this time hath caused us to renew our tailors' meeting which for some time past hath been neglected. Therefore being now again stirred up by the spirit of love and true tenderness for the good of all concerned, we do desire all Friends of our trade throughout this nation to let the plain innocent truth and the honour thereof be more in their eye than the profit and gain that may be had by making any garment that is not agreeable to truth and the plainness thereof. So that we may retain our first love and that we may still be known by the world to retain and keep to that which tendered our hearts that they may be made to confess that we are not a changeable people as some are that run into the many changeable fashions. Namely to keep out of making men's coats with a great compass and plated in the lower parts, and big cuffs with needless buttons; and likewise in women's apparel long slopes behind; which are the vain fashions of the world and not to be practised by us who profess the truth for we are not to fashion ourselves according to the course of this world but be transformed to the renewing of our minds. Signed on behalf of the said meeting, Edward Hudson, Tobias Pleadwell."

Next year thirty merchants, clothiers, and tailors met "according to the appointment of the half-year's meeting to consider whether it be convenient for Friends to make draught, figured and striped work or to sell such, or to make them up into clothes;" they decided that "it is comely and according to truth and truth-like for Friends to wear plain apparel, and

to make plain stuffs, and to sell plain things, and for tailors to make clothes plain; and that it will be commendable that all Friends, who have the truth chiefly in their eye in all the said clothes and goods, in their dealing, making and wearing; and that if any Friends do, for truth's sake lay aside and deny themselves of the profit of what they might expect to get by figured and striped things, we believe they will not lose their reward. And Friends would do well to encourage Friends of that trade that cannot answer the world's fashions." A few years later Hardshaw (Lancashire) Monthly Meeting in a similar way were of "opinion that Friends ought to buy and trade with each other."[1]

There was close association between Quakers in Ireland and in Cumberland, so, doubtless influenced by Irish Friends, we find those of Cumberland in 1693 asking London Yearly Meeting "whether it is agreeable to our ancient testimony against pride and superfluity to make wear or sell flowered printed stuffs, and fringed neckcloths and swordbelts."[2] Two of these Border Quakers were William Armstrong and his employee Aaron Atkinson, who "lived together in much love, and honoured truth in their trading, being at a word with people. And though they lived near Scotland yet they saw they were not to trade in goods which were prohibited as many did, neither were they free to sell such striped and gaudy cloth as was not seemly for Friends to wear." As their acquaintance was great and their integrity well known in the country they proved successful preachers in the villages through which they had travelled with their linen packs.[3]

London Friends seem to have held some tailors' meetings, and in Ireland they were kept up for a considerable time.

[1] *Inner Life of Societies of Commonwealth*, p. 498.

[2] See *Second Period of Quakerism*, Braithwaite, London, 1919, pp. 509–16, for more examples.

[3] *Life of Christopher Story*, New ed., London, 1820, pp. 45–8.

Quakers in this occupation who lived in country districts certainly must have found it difficult to get sufficient employment; in 1696 there was only one Quaker tailor in Munster and he was too poor to attend the trade meeting in Dublin. Next year the National Meeting records the settlement of a Welsh tailor near Mountrath as a matter worthy of its attention. These meetings were not only for restrictive purposes, but kept up the standard of goods produced; in 1717 Dublin Quaker clothiers, tailors, linen-drapers, and weavers advised that "goods should be made good, not hastily, and in full measure." That all Friends did not for very long continue to deal only in plain apparel is evident from a remark of Daniel Defoe's, who says: "All that we have left to wish for the particular good of this Kingdom is that we ourselves were less corrupted by those superfluities in which we trade, and that we could be like those Quakers who deal in finery and ornament, but never wear them themselves; content to bring them home, but to re-export them to more effeminate nations than we would have ours to be."[1]

Whatever the business was, the collarless coat of the "plain" Friend made the wearer have to endure ridicule and misunderstanding. Many prominent Quaker merchants shrank from dressing in this way, although it was a necessary adjunct to admission into the innermost circles of the Society; the organization may well have been weakened by the lack of their help.

In 1757 John Eliot, a young underwriter at Lloyd's, became a "plain" Friend and wrote something of his feelings to his grandfather who was not "plain." He says: "I can assure thee, Grandfather, that unless my present and everlasting peace had not been so nearly concerned, and I may say dependent on my obedience to this discovery of duty, I had never submitted my

[1] *Complete English Tradesman*, Defoe, 4th ed., London, 1738, Vol. II. p. 324.

will to become a fool among men and be the jest of those who before thought well of me; especially at a time when I had expectations of making a figure in life in an eminent and honourable branch of business. Yet even this, with the friendship of so many gentlemen of fortune, I am willing to give up, if I can't enjoy it without betraying the cause of truth."[1]

However, if many Friends in the eighteenth century wore the peculiar costume as a painful duty, some like Richard Reynolds and his wife adopted it cheerfully, as affording them increased means of relieving the wants of others.

I have already mentioned the change which came over the Society in the last decade of the seventeenth century. William Edmundson and Joseph Pike were the leaders in Ireland of the movement to encourage Friends to live more plainly. Edmundson, like Fox, was grieved to see how "the goodly and most glorious lawful things of the world were abused and misused;" but while Fox pleaded that if all lived simply there would be enough for all, Edmundson—the old Cromwellian soldier—looked upon the simple dress as a necessary discipline of daily cross and self-denial "that we might be ready to answer Christ Jesus our Captain, who had called us to follow him in a spiritual warfare," and he wished to bring back Friends to the conditions in the early days of the Society, when "great trading was a burden and great concerns a great trouble."[2] Under his influence the National Meeting of 1694 called a meeting of Quaker joiners, ship-carpenters and founders, who later reported that "chests of drawers ought to be plain, all of one colour, without any swelling works; that tables and chairs ought to be plain without carving, keeping out of all new fashions; and all mouldings one above another about beds, clock-cases, etc., ought to be avoided, only what is

[1] *Eliot Papers*, compiled by Eliot Howard, London, 1895, pp. 45–9.
[2] *Journal of W. Edmundson*, Dublin, 1715, pp. 324–5.

according to truth, so that all furniture should be plain. That ship-carpenters leave off carving and making images, and putting them up in ships. That saddlers make plain saddles for men and women." The carpenters met at least once more, whilst the shoemakers did so on several occasions. The National Meeting of 1701 passed the following minute: "Testimony of truth to be kept up by shoemakers who are to meet apart sometimes to examine how they keep it up in their trade with respect to the fashionable and superfluous part of it and if any are guilty of making fashionable shoes, or if any professing truth are not satisfied with such shoes as suit the plainness of our profession, but to gratify a high and nice mind will follow the vain unsettled fashions of the world, it is recommended to the several provinces to take care that such fault may be amended both in the said tradesmen and such as buy their wares, who profess truth, whether men or women, that so the testimony thereof may be kept up on that as well as on other things." The extravagant fashions in shoes which were in vogue just then may have been why the attention of the National Meeting was specially directed to this industry.

One other trade seems to have held its own meetings in London for many years. In 1684 George Fox had consulted the leading Quaker vintners in London before publishing an epistle on the dangers peculiar to their business. Total abstinence was, of course, not thought of, but the evils of intemperance were present to his mind. He recommended all vintners and innkeepers not to sell anyone more wine or other strong drink than was good for health; he also pointed out that if men had had too much wine they would want music and other recreations provided for them by the innkeeper, and such things led to disorder and excess. All Friends were to warn their children and servants to beware of strong drink.[1] Posters

[1] *Epistles*, p. 480.

were issued which Friends in the trade put up in their public rooms, and which helped to keep the houses free from disorder.[1] In 1682 Dublin Men's Meeting advised its members not to keep tippling houses or to sell strong beer, unless they had victualling and stabling for horses and lodging for travellers.

Simplicity in dress and in household furniture was an outward expression of the principles of self-control and moderation on which the consistent Quaker acted. A recent writer says: "The mere animal must perforce follow brute instinct. The proudest prerogative of civilized man is his power to say No. Now the Quaker says No to nearly everything. May this not be the source of his strength? Shunning all those pleasant byways of life in which most of us meander, his belief forced upon him a concentration and a probity that were bound to give him a great advantage over all competitors."[2]

Whether or not this be true of the twentieth-century Quaker, it was certainly a characteristic of the first hundred and fifty years of Quakerism, though perhaps expressed with too much emphasis on the negative. It was because the Quaker wanted to put first things of which others took little account, that he adopted a negative attitude towards what seemed to his contemporaries the necessities or at least the harmless pleasures of life. Joseph Pike, of Cork, was one of the most conspicuous examples of those whom the Divine Light "led to keep in the moderation and within the bounds of truth in their outward substance." He thought out his reasons for so doing and put them on record for those that came after him. He says for want of the Light of the Lord "many, by striving to be rich, have begun and run on rashly into great trades and dealing, beyond their abilities, and have thereby hurt their own souls,

[1] *Second Period of Quakerism*, p. 596.
[2] R. H. Mottram, quoted in *The Friend*, January 14, 1927, p. 42.

invaded other men's properties, and been a stumbling block in the way of the well-inclined, as well as a reproach and scandal to Friends and truth." He then explains how he had felt himself led in his own outward affairs. "I do not here mean that everyone should have an immediate divine motion to every action they go about in the affairs of this life; but, as the Light of Christ shines in the heart and immediately leads, moves or inclines the obedient to spiritual things, and to their duty towards the Lord, so also by the illumination thereof such a light is afforded as will lead them into the moderation, and keep them within the bounds of truth, so as not to run into extremes in trading and dealing, etc." Even the poor of this world will then be rich in that treasure which is beyond all the possessions of this world. "On the other hand, if it be the Lord's pleasure to bestow the affluence of earthly things on the honest hearted, they will receive it with thankfulness, and as a blessing from the Divine hand, being ready to do good, and communicate to the poor and needy in their generation." He next describes his own attempts to keep within the bounds of moderation. He began at eighteen years of age and traded in wool: "I do not remember that I ever broke my word or promise with any body, neither did I venture more in one ship than I was able to bear if she was lost, for I did not then, nor do I now, look upon it just to venture or hazard other men's substance let the prospect of profit be ever so great. And thus I went along gradually, keeping within bounds, not overtrading, or much encumbering myself in the world, and I lived frugally but not niggardly; and the Lord was pleased to bless my endeavours, I did all my business with industry and diligence, not slothfully, but according to the best of my understanding, leaving the success to Providence. I can also say I received the increase truly as a blessing from the Lord's hand, and with humble desires that he would give me a heart

to make use of it to His praise, and that I might with a free and willing heart serve Him with His own that He had bestowed on me; for I looked upon it then as I still do, that He had prospered me in the world for that end." He then gives a number of illustrations of how at times he and his partner deliberately restrained themselves from profitable transactions. On one occasion they could have made several thousand pounds by buying tobacco cheaply just before a heavy duty was imposed. "Now though the thing was just in itself and others might do it without reflection yet we could not, for the people would not only reflect upon it, but by our means upon truth also; and for this reason it was better to decline it."[1] When he thought he was getting too rich he stopped buying, and at all times kept himself free to carry out any service for the Society of Friends to which he felt called.

John Woolman has already been mentioned as another who lessened his business that he might have more time to devote to the service of humanity, and a number of Friends, whose names are less well known, did the same. Thomas Chalkley writes: "So I went to my calling and got a little money (a little being enough) which I was made willing to spend freely in the work and service of my great Master Christ Jesus."[2] Roger Hebden, of Malton, and John Gratton, of Moneyash, in the seventeenth, and George Bewley, of Cork, in the early eighteenth century, are other examples of those who definitely subordinated their temporal concerns to the call, not only of preaching in the cause of truth, but also of anything which tended to promote the welfare of their beloved Society and of its members. John Gratton says: "I went abroad as much as I could and kept my trade growing too, my family also grew bigger and bigger, and my care was great to pay all

[1] *Life of Joseph Pike, etc.*, London, 1837, pp. 119 ff.
[2] *Works and Journal of Thomas Chalkley*, London, 1791, p. 11.

I owed to everybody, so that I was often constrained to ride many miles after meetings to gain my markets on the second day of the week, and the Lord blessed me every way."[1]

The story of the building of Norwich Meeting House in 1679 shows that all were ready to limit their personal requirements to forward a piece of work for the Church. The richer Friends first subscribed, but when that was found not to be enough, the younger people held a meeting among themselves to see what they could contribute. They were mostly journeymen combers, weavers, and shoemakers, and so were advised not to promise more than they could honestly pay when called upon; "so they began to consider how much they could earn in a week and how much of that they could lay by towards the forwarding of so good a work; upon which we found that a handsome sum would be raised." When the building was started the young Friends thought it was going to be too small, and asked the rich Friends to subscribe £10 more each; the poorer Friends increased their subscriptions, too. "And for a further enlargement thereto, the young men made application to the young women servants, etc., desiring them to exert themselves upon this occasion, which they readily did, and raised several pounds among themselves; after which the work went regularly on, and was finished to the satisfaction of all concerned."[2] With the value of money as it was then, the contribution of the servant girls of Norwich was probably equal to one or two year's wages for one of them. Friends were constantly reminded of the necessity of keeping clear and correct accounts and of examining the relation between their income and expenditure at least once in the year. All the biographers of Richard Reynolds speak of his attention to these matters. His granddaughter says: "At the outset of his life the horror of debt

[1] *Journal of John Gratton*, London, 1779, p. 123.
[2] *Life of Benjamin Bangs*, London, 1798, pp. 27–30.

which never deserted him till his close determined him never to exceed his means, and he commenced house-keeping and made all his household arrangements upon a system of strict economy which enabled him unfailingly to adhere to this invaluable resolution. The advantage which he derived from acting on this principle, and his observation of the loss which others sustained from the neglect of it, induced him as a rule to liquidate every demand to which he was liable previous to the annual settlement of his accounts."[1]

Perhaps the most interesting example of one whose conscience was at variance with his means of livelihood was that of William Pegg. He was a man of great artistic gifts, and especially excelled in painting flowers in a natural manner on china. He was employed by the Derby China Factory for this purpose, but in 1801 gave up his work there, being chiefly influenced to do so by a passage in George Fox's *Works* based on the Deuternomic command not to make images, which Fox and Pegg understood to mean pictures also. Pegg then earned a living by making silk stockings, but these, too, he felt to be more for show than for use, so he began to make cotton stockings, which, however, were also a trial because they had to be ornamented with "clocks." When at length his employers let him make them quite plain, he was satisfied. His change of employment had resulted in a very considerable reduction in income both for himself and for his mother, and it added to his troubles that she ill-treated him in consequence, for she did not understand the Quaker principles which he had adopted. He later returned to his flower-painting for a time, but his conscience made him leave it again, and he set up in a small shop in Derby, where at last he found peace in selling goods in small quantities for ready money to his poor neighbours. At the time

[1] *Letters of Richard Reynolds*, H. M. Rathbone, London, 1852, p. 31. He is said to have given away twenty thousand pounds during his lifetime in a discriminating and unostentatious manner.

of his greatest trial he wrote in his journal as follows: "What I have done to bring me down into a state of poverty has been to preserve a conscience clear, and though I am thus situated, I think I am in a state preferable to my former one, when I earned my living in those things which had their rise in the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; and when I saw this to be so, I could not boast . . . a conscience void of offence between God and man. There is a poverty which is not sin—those who become poor for Christ's sake I mean; they give up those things which are contrary to the doctrine which He promulgated and in so doing . . . enjoy peace of mind."[1]

[1] *The Old Derby China Factory and its Workers*, J. Haslem, London, 1876, p. 80.

CHAPTER VII

RESTRICTIVE EFFECTS OF QUAKER PRINCIPLES

THE story of the persecution of the Quakers in the seventeenth century has been so often told that it is not necessary to repeat it here. Its effects on their means of livelihood were usually indirect, but none the less severe.

The seventeenth-century Quaker was often a small tradesman or a handicraftsman supporting his family by his own manual labour; if he were better off, he probably had poor handicraftsmen dependent on him for their means of livelihood. At that time those who did not attend the national Church services could be fined £20 per month, and often were. For periods ranging from three to eleven months in 1683, one hundred and seventy-eight Quakers in Bristol were fined amounts totalling £16,440. Of these people, eighty-seven men were returned as being of thirty-eight different occupations, including eight silk-weavers, eight grocers, six coopers, six cordwainers and six shoemakers; there were only six who could not be classed as either handicraftsmen or tradesmen. These were two schoolmasters, a surgeon, a gentleman, a merchant, and a scribe. It must therefore have meant great privation to meet such constant heavy fines.[1]

In 1684 the Quaker prisoners in York presented to the King a statement of their case, in the course of which they say: "They have taken away tradesmen's tools, and even all that divers had, to the ruin of many families, no longer able to keep their farms, or carry on any trade, or keep their families together. So that

[1] *Collection of the Sufferings . . . of the Quakers*, 2 vols., J. Besse, London, 1753, Vol. I. pp. 68–70.

through imprisonment and spoil of goods, such desolation seems to hasten upon many as all sober people lament to see."[1] In this particular case the fines were mostly for recusancy (i.e. for not attending the church) and for attending meetings, but distraint for tithes and for Church rates of various kinds continued long after the Toleration Act allowed freedom of worship. These distraints were usually in excess of the fine and often entailed a great deal of loss in other ways, even if they did not result in imprisonment and death. As late as the end of the eighteenth century seven Friends were imprisoned for tithe in York Castle and one of them died there. One Irish Friend was imprisoned for the same cause in 1835–6.

The most serious method of distraint was the taking away of the craftsman's tools; it was one frequently practised. Besse's *Collection of Sufferings* tells us that in Berkshire in 1675, "From William Rogers, a wheelwright, they took his working tools, not for want of other goods, but on purpose to disable him from working for his livelihood."[2] Again in Cambridge in 1674, "seizures were made on divers persons to the amount of £11. Of these was William Brazier, a poor shoemaker, who after distress of his household goods, was spoiled of his working tools, his wearing apparel and his wood for firing; and when reduced to lodge on straw they took from under him the sheets which covered that straw; nevertheless, his zeal and constancy continued immoveable."[3] As a result of the second Conventicle Act in 1670 the informers and officers were very busy in Suffolk: "And when they had made spoil of a poor weaver's goods, they brake his loom in pieces with the work in it, the only means he had to get bread for himself, his sick wife, and a young child."[4]

This habit of destroying what could not be carried away was

[1] *Sufferings*, Besse, II. p. 162.
[2] *Ibid.*, I. p. 10.
[3] *Ibid.*, I. p. 96.
[4] *Ibid.*, I. p. 674.

a common one among the persecutors. In a paper called *The Devouring Informers of Bristol*, written in 1682, an eyewitness, apparently not a Quaker, describes the methods of the informers: "Part of them came to the house of Mr. Richard Marsh in Corn Street, who is a person known to be one of the considerablest merchants in this city. These entering his house to make a distress for £10 broke open his counter door, and searched for money, and then went into an inward counter, and there seized and carried away his journal, ledger, cash and invoice books, and several other books of account to the number of thirty, and a bundle of written papers, and several sorts of household goods; not content with this, they seized also the provision of victuals then in the house; . . ." Having described how the house was ransacked and the servants and clients bullied, the writer concludes with a general summary. "Their manner of levying this distress is as follows, viz. when they enter a shop albeit there is abundance of goods in view, yet they break open chests, counters, etc., and thence take away the money; if no money to be had then they take either shop or household goods and of them generally to double their value; if any durst speak to them by way of reproof for these unreasonable proceedings, then they huff and threaten to send them to prison."[1]

Friends themselves tell a similar tale. Edmund Peckover, a man of some means, but old and lame, was prosecuted for recusancy; his son wrote in 1680: "Our adversaries are wholly bent to ruin us; they have distrained for £120, for the King's use as they say, upon the Statute of £20 a month, and have taken above forty pieces of serges and stuffs, some whole and some cut; also seventeen pieces of linen cloth, calico, and Scotch cloth, but would not let us measure any, that we know not what they amount to, so we have shut up shop to secure our

[1] *Sufferings*, I. pp. 61, 62.

creditors, and if there be no likelihood of a stop to their proceedings, we intend to keep open shop no more, but to pay where it is owing."[1] Other accounts indicate that the persecutors did not stop at their victim's own goods, but took the property of neighbours or creditors found on the premises; some were consequently unable to carry out George Fox's advice to "offer up to the Lord in their sufferings what was really their own." Goods were taken far in excess of the amount to be distrained, partly because many people refused to buy such articles, which were therefore often sold for much less than their value. Technically the money so obtained was supposed to go to the poor, but this was by no means always what was actually done with it. Yet a pleasant story comes from Cheshire in 1683. "Jeremiah Owen, baker, of Stockport, had bread taken from him which was offered to be given to the poor of the town, but they refused it, saying they would rather starve than take it. So it was restored to the owner. There was also a quantity of cheese taken from Jane Scrivener given to the poor of the parish; several of whom brought back to the owner what they had received of it; well near one half was so returned; the consciousness of the sufferers' innocence did so affect the minds of many that they thought it a sin to partake of any part of the spoil."[2]

There were several other ways in which Friends endangered their trades by maintaining their principles. A poor Oxfordshire miller, having been severely fined, was turned out of his mill by the Justice, who was also the landlord. "For all which hard usage he assigned no other cause than that the man was turned Quaker; 'which,' said the Justice, 'is the confoundedest religion of all.'"[3] In 1655 a pedlar was reading a book in a house in Suffolk when a Justice came in and, incensed at his not taking off his hat to him, summoned him on the charge of

[1] *Sufferings*, I. p. 505. [2] *Ibid.*, I. p. 111. [3] *Ibid.*, I. p. 573.

selling Quaker books; although the man proved that he was licensed he was cruelly whipped.[1]

Thomas Ellwood tells the story of "a very poor man who lived by mending shoes, and in a seventh day night late, a carman (or some such other labouring man) brought him a pair of shoes to mend, desiring him to mend them that night that he might have them in the morning, for he had no other to wear. The poor man sat up till after midnight, and then finding he could not finish them he went to bed intending to do the rest in the morning. Accordingly he got up betimes, and though he wrought as privately as he could in his chamber, that he might avoid giving offence to any, yet could he not do it so privately but that an illnatured neighbour perceived it, who went and informed against him for working on the Sunday. Whereupon he was had before Richard Brown who committed him to Bridewell for a certain time, to be kept to hard labour in beating hemp; which is labour hard enough."[2]

Travelling preachers were frequently treated by unfriendly magistrates as though they were vagrants, and sometimes even Friends on their business journeys were so considered. In 1656 "Humphrey Smith and Samuel Curtis being together at Chard Market were taken up by a Justice's warrant, whipt as vagabonds, and sent away, though Samuel Curtis was well known to be but seven miles from home and to be a clothier of considerable trade, wealth, and reputation."[3] Again, the next year, "William Wallace a Scotchman standing to sell cloth on Boston [Lincs] Market, had some of his goods taken away by the Mayor's order, under pretence that he had no right to sell any there, but in reality for being a Quaker, since that privilege was not denied to other foreigners."[4]

[1] *Sufferings*, I. p. 657.
[2] *History of T. Ellwood*, ed. S. Graveson, 1906, p. 141.
[3] *Sufferings*, I. p. 166.
[4] *Ibid.*, I. p. 346.

During the severe persecution at the end of Charles II's reign, greedy men found the Quakers an easy prey. Sometimes they did not wish openly to enrich themselves by accusing Friends of absence from church, yet if they owed money to a Quaker they would not hesitate to bring a writ against them with such an excuse; thus they not only avoided going to prison themselves, but saw the just creditor imprisoned and his trade ruined.

The actual fact of imprisonment told very hardly on an artisan or trader. The Quaker might be hurried off without being given time to make any arrangements. Sometimes the imprisonment of the master was followed by that of the mistress, the manservant, and the maid; no one was left to mind the shop or the house or the children. "Nathaniel Roberts and Daniel Roberts, brothers and partners in shopkeeping, after their shop had been broken open and much goods taken away for meetings, had the oath tendered them and were sent prisoners to the Castle. Their house was left empty, and their trade lost, to the very great detriment of those conscientious young men."[1]

The terrible prison conditions of the seventeenth century have often been described. Nothing was provided for the prisoners without payment, they were wholly at the mercy of the gaoler, who was often cruel and unscrupulous. It was frequently physically impossible to carry on the industry on which one's means of subsistence depended. The papers relating to the case of Friend prisoners in Norwich in 1683 give a vivid picture of the difficulties encountered. Among these prisoners was John Gurney, one of a family which was already engaged in moneylending, though their principal occupation was still that of the cloth trade. He was probably a man of considerable standing in the city.

[1] *Sufferings*, I. p. 224.

The Norwich gaoler had orders only to give one opportunity a day, and that at eight o'clock in the morning, for intercourse with the outside world. It was then that finished work had to be dispatched and new yarn received by those who were fortunate enough to have saved their working tools and to have obtained sufficient space in prison on which to use them. These were a small number, for the empty homes had been rifled, and the goods and tools which had not been sold were put in the Guildhall; in the dungeon of this building some of the sixty-three prisoners were interned. "Twenty two are in the low ward among felons and in great danger to be suffocated, and nine women in a low cellar, and no less in danger, it having no chimney, and the room very small; and the room which is the women's free prison, the gaoler lets for 7s. a week, wherein seven men do comb, six of which do lodge in it, being forced to spread their beds in the night on the place where they comb by day." Even if they could afford to pay for better quarters, that did not usually mean room to set up a loom and work at it; so the shoemakers were a little better off than the weavers because their work did not require much space. One man had to pay two shillings and fourpence a week for sharing a room with eight others and for a place to set up his loom, so dark that he had always to work by candlelight. George Whitehead had an interview with the King about these prisoners and gave him their petition, in which they said: "We . . . have for a long time been exposed to extreme suffering and hardships by distress of our goods and imprisonment of our bodies, tending to the utter ruin of us and our families, having all of us dependency on our industry and trades for a livelihood, yet by reason of our strait confinement we are necessitated both to shut up our shops and lay down our trade."[1] In handing the paper to the King, George

[1] *The First Publishers of Truth*, ed. N. Penney, London, 1907, pp. 177, 179.

Whitehead told him, "They are a poor harmless people; poor woolcombers, weavers, and tradesmen like to be destroyed in prison, in holes under the ground."[1] In their petitions Friends also sometimes pointed out the hardships their imprisonments entailed on those who worked for them. A petition in 1684 to the Justices at Brewton (Somerset) "seemed to have some influence inclining the court to moderation . . . for they had heard the cry of the people, and especially of the poor, complaining that they were like to perish for want, being destitute of employment; so many tradesmen, who used to employ them, being shut up in prison."[2]

At the beginning of his reign Friends sent a general petition to James II, in the course of which they pointed out these effects on industry. "The great spoil and excessive distresses and seizures are chiefly upon the Conventicle Act and for twenty pound a month, two-thirds of estates, and on *qui tam* writs.[3] In some counties divers have suffered by seizures and distresses above eight years last past, and writs issued out for farther seizures in several counties, for twenty pounds a month amounting to the value of many thousands of pounds, sometimes seizing for eleven months at once and making sale of all goods and chattels, within doors and without, both of household goods, beds, shop-goods, moveables, cattle, etc., and prosecution hereupon still continued, and in divers counties much increased; so that several who have long employed some hundreds of poor families in manufacture, and paid considerable taxes to the King, are greatly disabled from both by these writs and seizures as well as by long imprisonments. So many sergemakers of Plymouth as kept above five hundred poor people at work, disabled by imprisonment. Many in the county of Suffolk under a long imprisonment

[1] *Sufferings*, I. pp. 510–13. [2] *Ibid.*, I. p. 634.
[3] *Qui tam* writs were those obtained by informers.

sentenced on a premunire, one whereof employed at least two hundred poor people in the woollen manufacture, when at liberty. Omitting other instances that we may not seem too tedious, these may evince how destructive such severities are to trade and industry and ruinous to many poor families."[1]

Long before magistrates and King realized the evil effects of thus withdrawing so many workers from their trades, some gaolers had risked imprisonment themselves by letting Friends go home to see about their businesses; in Yorkshire, Friends contributed to the cost of defending gaolers that were proceeded against for granting this liberty.[2] William Edmundson tells in his *Journal* that on one occasion he was excommunicated with the other Friends of his meeting, "but was abroad in truth's service when they were taken. When I came home the officers met me, for I did not shun them, but they would not take me to prison, for they said they had too many in prison already, who were kept from their labour and families; yet Friends were easy in their spirits, being given up to suffer for the testimony of truth and in the prison every one settled to one employment or other."[3] Many Friends, indeed, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods and their own hardships, and some seem to have prospered in spite of it all. Of Daniel Taylor of Bridport it was recorded: "This our dear Friend lay open to spoil, he keeping a large shop of goods, they took so often and so much from him that some relation or neighbour or both desired him to shut his windows or give over his trade, otherwise he was as they accounted like to be undone; he mildly and pleasantly answered that if they did not take goods more or oftener than they began, he was like to get it faster than they took it away."[4]

1 *History of the Quakers*, Sewell, 5th ed., 2 vols., London, 1811, Vol. II. p 409
2 *Second Period of Quakerism*, p. 570 *n.*
3 *Journal of W. Edmundson*, p. 42.
4 *Remains of D. Taylor*, London, 1715, p. 16.

Although the Toleration and Affirmation Acts brought to Quakers relief from the severer forms of persecution, there remained a number of legal disabilities which affected their means of livelihood. Distraint for tithe and other Church dues continued to take from them a considerable amount of property each year. During the earlier part of the eighteenth century this represented in money value alone more than five thousand pounds a year in Great Britain and Ireland, while by 1800 it was over eight thousand pounds annually. Yet many Friends who were not of the stricter type found some way of compromising with the tithe-takers.

Another cause of loss was the refusal to recognize so-called holy days other than Sunday. In country towns in the seventeenth century and even in cities, such shops as there were, were usually part of the owner's dwelling-house, so that the question of shutting them or not on Sundays hardly arose. There are places in the British Isles to-day where the shop remains open as long as the household is up. Friends, however, closed their places of business to enable as many of the family and servants as possible to attend meeting, whether it was held the first day of the week or on any other. There was issued in 1760, by the Morning Meeting (in London), a paper entitled, "Tender advice and caution to Friends respecting their putting out lights on those called Rejoicing Nights, and the not opening their shops on days appointed by human authority for public fasts, feasts, and thanksgivings." Having shown that as Friends could not rejoice in the shedding of blood, they could not celebrate a military victory by illuminating their houses or by closing their shops, the paper refers to the practice of early Friends, of whom it says, "notwithstanding they were charged with being led by a spirit of singularity, obstinacy, and a desire to be contrary to others, yet they demonstrated that in whatsover they could comply agreeable to good conscience

they were ready to do it. Thus they generally concurred with the propriety and decency of the public in appropriating the first day of the week for public worship, and as they believed it to be a duty to suspend the pursuit of their outward concerns, and to meet often together according to the practice of God's people in former days, they also set apart some portions of time, for the same good purpose on other days and sometimes also they made occasional appointments, as they found freedom in the spirit of truth so to do." This in cautious and conventional language probably gives the ordinary attitude of the Quaker towards Sunday. He was not a Sabbatarian in the strict sense, and for perhaps one hundred years or more Friends kept their shops open on Sundays if it were the local custom, just as they closed them on other days to attend meetings for worship or for the business of the Society.

By the middle of the eighteenth century a change was taking place, and even in such an out-of-the-way place as Roscrea in the centre of Ireland we find Friends making a mutual agreement to refrain from opening shops or selling goods on Sundays (unless necessary).[1] Towards the end of the century there seems to have been a definite stand made in some places for Sunday closing. On the 12th of the second month, 1786, six Leighton Buzzard Friends publicly announced as follows: "Having conformed, for several years past, to the too general custom in our town of opening shops on the morning of the first day of the week called Sunday, we have sorrowfully experienced the disagreeable consequences resulting therefrom in that the mind engrossed by temporal concerns, is rendered unfit to offer that pure spiritual worship which is acceptable to God. The wholly setting apart of one day in the week for the solemn purpose of worshipping Almighty God is but a small sacrifice of our time to Him, who

[1] *Minutes of Mountmellick Men's Meeting*, 1749.

is the giver of all good, and from whom we enjoy every blessing both spiritual and temporal; therefore in order to be more at liberty ourselves and to give more liberty to our families and customers to perform their necessary but too much neglected Christian duties, and from no other motive, we are induced to decline keeping our shops open on the said first day of the week. . . . Our motives for this proceeding being solely those above-mentioned which we are willing to hope will meet the approbation of our friends and customers, we respectfully request all those who have been used to come to our shops on a first day (called Sunday) to come or send on the preceeding day, or some other convenient day of the week for such goods as they may want; and their favours as heretofore will be gratefully acknowledged by their obliged friends and well-wishers John Grant, Thomas Wheeler, Peter Bassett, Benjamin Reeve, Martha Heley, Susannah Heley." The refusal of the Quaker to close his shop on Christmas Day led at first to much spoiling of his goods and sometimes to imprisonment. In cities like Dublin and Cork, year after year the rabble, often assisted by soldiers, would break their windows and plunder their shops on Christmas Day. After the accession of William III, Friends in Dublin used to ask the Mayor to protect their houses from the crowd, and also appealed to the colonel of the local regiment to keep the soldiers from joining in the destruction. Gradually, as they became better understood, the yearly looting of their shops became less, and by 1708 they could report that their shops stood open all day without disturbance. Only two years before, the National Meeting had decided that on "Idle days such as that called Christmas," Friends were not to suffer shops to remain shut after being closed by the officers, but to keep open till evening; the master of the shop had to be particular to be in attendance himself. Earlier it had been questioned whether it was right for Friends

to make provision in their places of business or to supply goods for "Idolous days;" this problem would particularly affect the grocers and chandlers.

Josiah Forster, writing in 1789, gives four reasons why he opened his shop on Christmas Day. Firstly, "its name shows its origin to be derived from our Romish ancestors." In the second place, "it is putting the Son of God and Saviour of the world upon an equal footing with a Romish legendary saint, by keeping one or two days in the year for him, who ought to be had in continual remembrance, not only on one but every day of the year, and every hour of the day." His other reasons were that the observance of particular days made people neglect true religion, and, as these days were not usually spent in a holy way, it was hypocrisy to shut up shop and not keep the day. Occasionally the Quaker was in a position to force the lesson home by a practical example. Robert Abbatt made a water supply for Preston in 1728. He was fined for supplying water on Good Friday, whereupon he refused to supply water on any Friday, for he thought all Fridays should be good.[1]

Two other "testimonies" of Friends led to the restriction of their economic activities; these were the denial of the necessity of oaths and of war. The insistence on fewness of words in bargaining and on their accuracy was closely connected with the Quaker's refusal to set up two standards of truth by taking an oath. This in the seventeenth century deprived Friends of the right to trade in a corporate town. In 1658 Richard Pearce, of Limerick, "being an apothecary was denied his right to the freedom of the city because he could not swear. And when some time after upon a renewal of the Charter two other apothecaries came and set up there, they combined in conjunction with the surgeons, barbers, distillers and others, to form themselves into a company, on purpose (as some of

[1] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, IX. p. 151.

them confessed) to have the said Richard Pearce's shop shut up, and him turned out of the city, and by that means exposed to such hardships as must attend the loss of his employment. All which was for his conscientious obedience to the precept of Christ 'Swear not at all.' Stephen Warner a joiner had many of his tools taken away by the Master of the Company because he could not swear; and their oppression and threats were such that he was necessitated to depart the city, having a wife and three small children. Thomas Phelps a shopkeeper had taken from him on the 15th day of the seventh month, 269 bushels of French salt for refusing to take an oath and for the same cause he was denied the freedom of the city."[1]

A similar case occurred in Northampton, but the guilds were probably more active in Ireland in the seventeenth century than in England, and political conditions in the former country soon made the Protestant traders willing to have the Quakers in their guilds. Before the end of Charles II's reign they were accepted as members by the Weavers' Corporation in Dublin. After James II had remodelled many of the corporations in England and Ireland some Friends in the latter country served on them; one, Anthony Sharp, being made Master of the Weavers' Guild. Through his influence no oath was required from those entering that guild,[2] and in 1698 the English law-courts decided that an affirmation could be taken instead of an oath by those seeking the freedom of a city.[3]

The principal ways in which the passing of the Affirmation Act of 1696 made matters easier for Quakers in business were that it enabled them to sue for their debts, to carry through transactions with the customs and excise, to defend their titles, and to give evidence. It also made it legal for them to prove wills and to be admitted to copyholds.[4] Until a form of

[1] *Sufferings*, II. p. 463.
[2] See *Quakers in Ireland*, I. Grubb, London, 1927, pp. 49–51.
[3] *Second Period of Quakerism*, p 202 *n*. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

affirmation was passed which all Friends could accept, some continued to suffer as before; one instance is that of William Richardson, a tanner, who did not feel it right to use the first form of affirmation to free his hides from customs duty, so about one-third of his property was taken from him in fines.[1]

One of the most interesting cases of refusal to take an oath was that of Daniel Quare, whom George I wanted to appoint as his official watchmaker at a salary of three hundred pounds a year. The King had already had many years' experience of the good quality of Quare's work, and a day or two after his arrival in England offered him a patent to be his clock and watchmaker for life. Quare at first thought of asking the King's leave to appoint someone as his deputy, "but," he says, "this did not dwell long upon my spirit for the Lord had set my heart more on bearing a clear and plain testimony to Jesus Christ's prohibition of swearing than of the honour or profit offered me, and the more knowing the King much a stranger to Friends." He had an opportunity of explaining his scruples to the King, and told him, "I did not refuse to swear out of the principle of non-jurats, but because I believed that Jesus Christ had prohibited all oaths in the fifth of Matthew. The King told me he did not take my refusal to be otherwise, and also said I might come to him whenever I pleased; accordingly the Yeoman of the Guard at the Backstairs lets me frequently go up without calling anybody for leave as is usual though persons of quality." Although he could not get the patent, no one else was given it, and he probably continued to supply watches and clocks to royalty and to "men of the greatest rank" in Europe as he had done for forty years previously.[2]

[1] *Annals of the Cleveland Richardsons*, Newcastle, 1850, pp. 14–15.
[2] *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, 1900, p. 39, Art. on D. Quare, by Isaac Sharp.

Thomas Chalkley would not himself swear, nor was he willing to have sailors in his ship who swore. If he heard them doing so he reproved them, and says: "If I could not be instrumental that way to break them from swearing, and drinking to excess, my manner was to put them away so that we generally had a pretty quiet ship."[1] Friends did not get the Affirmation Act renewed without opposition, and on one occasion, probably that of 1722, they found it necessary to issue a statement of their case, which was called *Considerations Relating to the Quakers' Affirmation*. In it they refer to the advantages to trade and revenue. "It is not unknown that many of the said people employ not only themselves and families, but thousands of others in sundry manufactures of this Kingdom, which very much adds to the promoting of trade in general. If therefore they are rendered incapable of proving their just debts (by discontinuing the present affirmation) their carrying on of the manufactures will be greatly discouraged and those makers amongst them who now cheerfully pay their respective quotas of all public charges, as well as maintain their own poor, may be reduced to poverty themselves. Besides it is inconceivable what an obstruction to business, and vast prejudice it must be, for want thereof in every custom-house in all the ports of this Kingdom, where so many Quakers are almost daily concerned for themselves and others. Not to mention the confusion that will inevitably follow upon their being rendered incapable to give evidence to wills, deeds, contracts, etc., to which they are already witnesses; whereby persons not Quakers will be deprived of the benefit of the law."

The wealthier Friends who accepted the Affirmation of 1696 were many of them Whig in sympathy, while the stricter Friends were more favourable to the Jacobites. Party bias may therefore have been responsible for a paper against giving the

[1] *Journal of Thomas Chalkley*, p. 227.

Quakers liberty to use an affirmation instead of an oath at the election of members of Parliament. Its reference to Quaker business activities is evidently influenced by some otherwise unknown incident, but it illustrates the hostility which their commercial success aroused in some minds. Some of the objections were: "They are a people that never venture life or limb to propagate the public good, as others do; yet when better subjects have with the jeopardy of their limbs and lives cleared a trade none more ready than the Quakers to suck the fruits thereof by traffic and merchandize; and more especially by oppressing the widows of seafaring men, by concealing their estates, with their books and papers, leaving them no help but a Quaker's affirmation to discover all we have; and against all these evils and abuses we have no more redress than if we were in the midst of Pennsylvania. Besides they are as great underminers of our trade as they are of our religion, and do brag that a third of the trade of the nation is in their hands, and so will have a third of the money, and by that do as much mischief as Guy Faux with his gunpowder only not so speedily." Perhaps the writer of this outspoken denunciation had found that a Quaker's affirmation was too honest for him. At any rate one wonders whether they ever did claim to have a third of the trade of the nation in their hands. Probably the attention which their peculiar dress and speech attracted made people overestimate their numbers.

In the summer and autumn of 1800, England was feeling the pinch of famine. Owing to the French War sufficient supplies of corn could not be imported and the Government were buying up large quantities for the Army. For some reason or other the poor people of London were persuaded that the lack of corn was due to the Quakers, and riots ensued in which, though there was no loss of life, caused considerable disturbance. Although Robert Howard, father of Luke Howard,

the meteorologist, was a manufacturer of tin-plate, the mob thought he was storing corn and decided to attack his factory. Howard's workpeople heard of it, and without telling their master, put their shirts over their coats that they might know each other in the dark, took the legs of the stools on which they sat, and when their opponents arrived, completely defeated their attempts to raid the premises. Robert Howard published a pamphlet disproving the various assertions which were being made against Friends. The chief of these was that the Quakers had banded together and had bought up great supplies of corn, especially about Uxbridge, and had stored them, even using an old meeting-house for the purpose.[1] Further, that they were so numerous that they ruled the market at Mark Lane and so kept up the price. Howard showed that corn had never been stored in the places where it was said to be, and that the meetings of the Quakers were certainly not for the purpose of combining to monopolize the corn trade. He suggested that it could be proved from the records of sales at the Mansion House that the Quakers had only about one-tenth of the corn trade in their hands. This he admitted was a large proportion for so small a body, but he thought the rural life of the miller agreeable to anyone disposed to seriousness, and that it gave "more opportunity for retirement and recollection than most trades will admit of;" hence its suitability for Quakers. He also referred to the exaggerated ideas of their numbers, which might be caused by their peculiar garb. He concluded with the following general statement, which is a fair estimate of the position at this time. "It should be remembered, too, that the church, the state, and all the numerous

[1] Joseph Metford, who visited some of the Uxbridge Quaker millers about the time, says: "The Government of the day had no objection for the blame to rest anywhere rather than on themselves who had been dragged into a long and ruinous war by the united efforts of the Aristocracy and the Clergy." *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, XXV. p. 42.

offices under government afford no provision for such as refuse the taking of the oath, and a conformity to the national worship. Quakers have few means of obtaining a livelihood but by trades and manufactures; and if in following these, some of them are examples of industry, they ought not to be despised on that account. It is acknowledged that labour and industry are the support of a state; for this and for their quiet behaviour in every situation, the government has thought right to indulge and protect them. It is also I believe true that in no religious society there is more, if so much care, exercised to prevent misconduct; and we have reason to hope that this care is often exercised with success. There is a yearly inquiry made whether the members of the Society are 'just in their dealings.' Is it likely then that we should countenance such things as have been reported of us? I put in a claim as an old and well-known tradesman to be credited in asserting that we hold such doings in abhorrence."

Even this outspoken appeal was not successful, and in September the mob were very disturbing at the interment of William Allen's father. In the next month the Meeting for Sufferings took action and spent fifty pounds on having the following statement circulated through the Press and otherwise: "The Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, having been for some time calumniated as oppressors of the laborious and indigent classes of the community by combining to monopolize those necessary articles of life, corn and flour, think themselves called upon to vindicate their own innocence and integrity, and to assert that no such combination or monopoly hath existed, or doth exist, either with respect to corn or flour, or to any other article whatever; and that they abhor such wicked and baneful practices. Aggrieved by the

[1] *A Few Words on Corn and Quakers*, R. Howard, 2nd ed., London, 1800, p. 22.

unjust reproach, they not only assert their innocence but put in their claim for possessing an equal degree of sympathy for the wants of the poor with their fellow citizens of any description. If any man will come forward and prove that the charge of forestalling, monopolizing, or regrating which they solemnly deny to attach to the Society, or any other improper conduct whereby the necessaries of life are enhanced in price, can be fixed on any one or more individuals they are far from desiring to screen such from justice; but at all events they claim for the Society in general a place in the good opinion of their countrymen, and freedom from the insults which they have long patiently borne."

What the results of this appeal were is not recorded, but probably the opposition died down when the statements, which had been in part fostered by the Press, were thus contradicted. The author of the paper against the affirmation considered that Friends' refusal to take part in the military defence of their trade was an argument on his side, and his contemptuous reference to Pennsylvania shows the scorn in which he held Quaker peace principles. Possibly anti-pacifist feeling may also have had something to do with the agitation against the Society in 1800.

During the previous one hundred and fifty years England had not suffered from foreign invasion, but there had been opportunities for Friends to carry out their peace principles in connection with their commercial and industrial activities. In Ireland there had been a foreign enemy in the country for three years from 1689 to 1692, and at this time Friends had had in many ways to stand by their belief in friendliness to all. When James II's army wanted clothing he supplied Dublin weavers with wool forfeited by those who had fled to England. Anthony Sharp, the master of the guild, and others, refused to use the forfeited wool, and as they were only paid

for the cloth in James II's brass money, their loss was a heavy one. Similarly, after the war, they would not have anything to do with goods which had been plundered from the Irish. For the next sixty years Friends sometimes had their shops and houses attacked by the mob when they would not illuminate them on the occasion of a victory.

If Quaker tailors had to bear their testimony against "superfluity," Quakers who were owners or masters of ships had to show that they trusted in a higher power than that of physical force. The press-gang took Quaker sailors and found them difficult problems to solve. In 1672 Aberdeen Friends were consulted by the wife of Alexander Somerville as to whether he ought to go into hiding from the press-gang. Though they judged it wisest for him not to do so, they left him liberty to decide for himself. He was the only seaman in the whole town that appeared in the court when summonsed by the magistrates. This did not save him, for he was put in prison because he would not promise to enlist for the Dutch War which was going on. "Friends thought fit to advise him not to give any engagement either by word or writ lest otherwise it might mar his peace and reflect on his truth."[1]

Another war was in progress in 1693 when London Yearly Meeting wrote to its members about shipmasters who professed to be Quakers "carrying guns in their ships, supposing thereby to defend and secure themselves and their ships, contrary to their former principle and practice, and to the endangering their own and others' lives thereby; also giving occasion of more severe hardships and sufferings to be inflicted on such Friends as are prest into ships of war, who for conscience sake cannot fight or destroy men's lives." Monthly and quarterly meetings were recommended to deal with such shipmasters, "and in God's wisdom and tender love to stir

[1] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, VIII. pp. 42, 43.

them up and awaken their consciences that they may seriously consider how they injure their souls in so doing and what occasion they give to make the truth and Friends to suffer by their declension and acting contrary thereto through disobedience and disbelief."

In spite of this strongly worded appeal there seems to have been in the eighteenth century a good deal of laxity among individual Quakers connected with the shipping trade, for the records from many of the coast towns give examples of those who had to be reproved for carrying arms on their ships or who were concerned in the fitting out of privateers. One Quaker firm compromised Friends' peace testimony and love of sincerity by placing dummy guns on its ships, the first line of packet ships that sailed regularly between England and America with mails and passengers.[1]

John Gurney, the founder of the bank at Norwich, had to take his nephew to task for allowing a subscription list for the fitting out of privateers to be kept at the bank; he wrote to the local newspaper to disclaim the action.[2]

The story of how Dr. Joseph Fox tried to return his share of prize goods has often been told, but Cornish Friends had not always been so upright, for in 1745 William Cookworthy had had to write that Friends in Plymouth had been large purchasers of prize goods, and adds: "It seems to be grown into a settled maxim that Friends may deal in prize goods—I hope I shall be kept clear of it, as I believe it would bring a cloud on my mind."[3] It was a little later that Robert Plumstead found his conscience pricking him for exporting arms to America at the time of the Seven Years War. He wrote to a correspondent: "You know we as a people are in principle

[1] *Quakers in Peace and War*, M. E. Hirst, London, 1923, p. 226 f.
[2] *Annals of an East Anglian Bank*, W. H. Bidwell, Norwich, 1900, pp. 19, 20.
[3] *William Cookworthy*, T. Compton, London, 1895, p. 16.

against everything that tends to war and bloodshed, and consistent with this belief can neither be active therein nor partake of the profit arising from the sale of goods the use whereof is for destructive purposes. This lays me under a difficulty which there seems but one expedient for. The demands for these things are but temporary, they cease in time of peace, and are now but a very small part of your business, would it be any great inconvenience to you to let them drop? It would ease me of a scruple that at present I cannot divest myself of, though at the same time am far from judging those who do not profess with us for acting as they may find freedom, and here I must leave it to your Christian consideration." He did, however, send some guns out to America later, but would not take any profit for so doing.[1]

Joseph Gurney Bevan in 1778 refused a similar order and also told his customers in New York that he could not use subterfuges to send them goods while shipments to that port were prohibited. Some at least of his correspondents appreciated his straightforwardness. The fineness of his feelings in these matters is seen in a letter which he wrote to Antigua ten years later, refusing to execute an order for an ounce of musk. He says: "The India Company have sometime prohibited its importation in their China ships lest its scent should be detrimental to their tea. Hence all that came was smuggled. This to me was unpleasant who am careful not to meddle with what is fraudulently imported; however, considering it was not for consumption here I have hitherto bought it; I have lately understood that the Company's officers, who are the people that bring it, are sworn to do nothing to the detriment of the Company, and the later deeming the bringing of musk in tea ships to be detrimental it occasions

[1] *English Historical Review*, January 1916, p. 140, Art. by C. A. J. Skeel, "The Letter Book of an English Quaker Merchant."

a sort of infringement of the oath which I am not easy to countenance."[1]

The testimony for peace which affected those who traded in sea-borne goods also compelled the Quaker ironmasters to decide whether they would manufacture cannon and other weapons of warfare. One Quaker firm in Birmingham carried on the manufacture of guns for seventy years before the matter was officially dealt with by Friends. The position was complicated by the fact that the guns might be, and very often were in peacetime, used for purposes of sport, whether in England or abroad. Also it must be remembered that there was no unarmed police force in the country, and Friends who wished to live apart from the world did not always see their inconsistency in asking those who believed in the use of force to protect them in times of civil commotion. In wartime the issue was clearer.

During the war which began in 1739 Richard Ford is said to have made cannon at the Coalbrookdale works, but when, during the Seven Years War, Richard Reynolds was in control of the same firm, a large order from the Government for cannon was refused. When other firms were turning out weapons to coerce the American colonies into submission, Abraham Darby III employed his men in erecting the cast-iron bridge over the Severn which is still standing at Ironbridge. It was probably because the big Quaker firms like the Darbys refused to manufacture ammunition during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars that the non-Quaker iron manufacturers outdistanced them in wealth.[2]

Having passed through a period of decline and almost of

[1] *Plough Court. The Story of a Notable Pharmacy*, compiled by E. C. Cripps, London, 1927, pp. 175–7.

[2] See *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*, T. S. Ashton, Manchester, 1924, p. 219. I am much indebted to this book for information about Quakers in the iron industry.

stagnation the strength of the Society of Friends began to revive towards the end of the eighteenth century, and it took a more definite stand for peace than had been in evidence for a long time previously. London Yearly Meeting in 1790 decided that, "If any be concerned in fabricating or selling instruments of war let them be treated with in love; and if by this unreclaimed let them be further dealt with as those we cannot own. And we intreat that, when warlike preparations are making, Friends be watchful lest any be drawn into loans, arming, or letting out their ships or vessels or otherwise promoting the destruction of the human species." Samuel Galton, a leading Friend in Birmingham, and his son of the same name, were heads of the gun manufacturing firm to which allusion has already been made. After their Monthly Meeting had paid considerable attention to their case, Samuel Galton, senior, gave up his share in the business in 1795. His son was disowned in the following year.[1]

The tide of Quakerism seemed at this time to have ebbed far from the position of George Fox when he made his outspoken protest against the world's evil ways and customs, but it was already turning, and that feeling of responsibility for each other, which was so evident within the bounds of the Society in the eighteenth century, was finding a wider sphere of service. One of the most characteristic features of Quakerism in the early part of the next century was to be its philanthropy. Friends had never ceased to care for the well-being of others, but up to 1800 their organized efforts had been much more often restrictive than constructive. To such constructive efforts as they did make in the sphere in industry we now turn.

[1] For further details, see *Quakers in Peace and War*, pp. 233–40.

CHAPTER VIII

INDUSTRIAL PHILANTHROPY

THE working of the Poor Law in England from 1660 to 1800 has been described as "an anarchy of local autonomy." The weak central authority could not control the parish officials. The overseers of the poor usually contented themselves with seeking employment for those who needed it, with maintaining as cheaply as possible children and the aged who could not work, and with ensuring that no one who was likely to become a burden to the rates should obtain a "settlement" in the parish. There was no idea of any national scheme of poor relief; each parish was anxious to do as little as possible for its own poor, and nothing for any stranger.

Since such system as there was, was closely connected with the religious basis of the parish, Friends would not share in it; but their feeling of responsibility for each other made them institute and carry out plans for the relief of their own poor. These, in so far as they deal with apprenticeship and with the setting up of poor Friends in business, have been described in a previous chapter, but we must now consider several schemes suggested or carried out by Friends to provide work for those unable to obtain it. As George Fox's letter about apprenticeship showed, they aimed at enabling all who could work to be self-supporting, and also at maintaining those who were unable to work, so that such schemes were both philanthropic and industrial.

George Fox had urged the magistrates of London to provide, out of the luxuries in which the richer citizens indulged, for the beggars who thronged their streets. Thomas Lawson, a

Quaker schoolmaster from Westmorland, addressed Parliament itself on the subject, asking it to take immediate measures "that there may not be a beggar in England." He set out a definite arrangement for this purpose and wanted this "platform," as he called it, to be made compulsory. He suggested that Judges of Assizes should primarily be responsible for the condition of the poor in their districts and for the carrying out of the law with regard to their relief. In a postscript he says: "This work of charity doth not concern Parliament men, and officers for the poor only, but all other in authority to exercise their power in their respective places for the general good; and all not in authority also; rich men to encourage it in every way being best able; and the middle sort do their endeavour lest they [be] like small creepers in a chimney who bear the burden and heat of the fire until they be wasted to cinders; and the poor to avoid idleness which is oftentimes the cause of begging. . . ."[1] He proposes that those who cannot support themselves should be maintained by money collected by the parish, and those who are only able to do a little should also be helped as much as is necessary; but that those who are poor through lack of employment should have it provided for them. He takes it for granted that work can be found for everyone, and aims at making the idle work. Some able men that rightly understand their business are to find out all the poor in their parish who need work and are to agree with "some clothier, stuff or stocking maker to furnish them with so much work as they can do. . . . So in great cities where is much trading in silk, wool, hair, winding, weaving, button-making, etc., every parish or division agree with some tradesman or men to provide for ten or twenty as aforesaid, and so may rise to hundreds and thousands by the same rule." His

[1] "An appeal to the Parliament concerning the poor that there may not be a beggar in England." T. L., London, 1660.

next suggestion is that there should be a labour office in every parish. It was to be a place where (*a*) "handicraftsmen and labourers that want work, and such as want workmen may enquire;" (*b*) masters may find apprentices and servants, and vice versa; (*c*) maids may find employment, "but none to be put to service until they be first taught to spin, knit, sew, learn some trade, or way of livelihood, who else are neither fit for service nor can in after time do anything for themselves;" (*d*) the destitute can find help. To enable the system to work well, everybody should be free to give information about distress; officers who neglected their duties should be punished; no poor people are to have their liberty taken from them until their wants are supplied.

Lawson suggests, further, that a census of the poor and unemployed should be made in the crowded areas of the towns. "I have considered of cities, towns, and villages, but no place have I found where this platform may not be suitable, with little or no alteration; although it be short, it concludes enough to effect the work, and with little trouble or charge in comparison with some proposals concerning the poor, and being faithfully executed there may not be a beggar in England, which is the desire and hope of one that hath no intention of evil to any, but wisheth the good of all, who having been many years exercised among the poor, and much desired their good, and through long experience have seen the ground of their misery, the easiness of the remedy and the benefit."

Thomas Lawson's suggestions were not taken up by the Government, but Friends before long made practical experiments in these directions. In the letter of 1669, in which he explained the organization which he proposed for the Society, George Fox said: "And Friends to have and provide a house or houses where an hundred may have rooms to work in, and

shops of all sorts of things to sell, and where widows and young women might work and live."[1] But at the time persecution was too severe for his idea to be carried out; yet, as we have seen, the Quaker organization could be made use of as a kind of employment exchange.

From the earliest days of Quakerism, money had been collected for the needs of Friend prisoners, and part of that money was spent in providing them with materials for working at their handicrafts. Even those who had means had to have the materials obtained for them, and in each meeting there was some Friend responsible for the care of those in prison. When the customary employment of the prisoner was not one that could be carried on in such circumstances, he was advised what it was thought best for him to do. Thomas Ellwood, the tutor, learnt to make flannel waistcoats; William Dewsbury and others supported themselves by making laces. When almost all the Reading Friends were in prison together in 1671 they had a common fund, and the poorer Friends were advised to make shoemakers' pegs, "because Friends judge those may sell best, and they encouraged to work." Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting also employed co-operative methods to help the numerous Quaker prisoners in York Castle in 1677; they collected £160 and got the Friends imprisoned there to cut corks and pick oakum. Later they bought looms for weaving linen, and the prisoners were also making stockings and laces. After 1696 the Quarterly Meeting decided that the fund should be kept at £100 "standing stock for the use of prisoners which suffers for truth-sake; and the residue . . . shall be . . . for the future service of the Quarterly Meeting."[2]

By this time the number of Quaker prisoners was much lessened, and Friends were already devising plans to assist poor Friends by giving them employment. In March 1677 the

[1] *Epistles*, p. 288. [2] *Second Period of Quakerism*, pp. 568–70.

Six Weeks Meeting in London handed over to William Meade £100 "out of the annuity money in their hands to be employed as a stock to buy flax to employ poor Friends in spinning." With the assistance of two other Friends, William Meade was to buy flax and distribute it to the persons appointed to receive it in each monthly meeting, pay the spinners for their work, and deliver the yarn to the weavers.

Apparently this arrangement was not entirely satisfactory, for a year and a half later, on the advice of women Friends, Margery Browne and two others were appointed to oversee the practical side of the work. Friends were to be informed when the linen was ready for sale. In the next year a small advisory committee was set up, and in January 1680 the minutes record that "William Meade reporting he has one hundred pounds given to the stock for setting the poor at work, Friends do agree that the same be disposed of by the Friends formerly appointed for the said service and to apply themselves to this meeting for advice at all times as there is occasion; they have chosen John Bellers to keep the account thereof, and the cash, wherein they have the consent of the meeting."[1]

Much attention has been paid by recent writers to the suggestions and writings of John Bellers[2]; here reference can only be made to his practical schemes for helping the poor to support themselves. Perhaps it was the experience gained when acting as treasurer for the experiment of London Friends that directed his thoughts towards these matters. Poverty was increasing in England, and the purchasing power of wages was low; yet the prevalent idea was that there was enough work for all and that those who were poor were those who did not

[1] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, XII. p. 122.

[2] See *Second Period of Quakerism*, pp. 571–94; *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, XII. pp. 120–7 and pp. 165–71; and *Authority in Church and State*, P. S. Belasco, London, 1928.

want to work. Plans were being made for building public workhouses which would be a kind of test of poverty. In 1695 Bellers published his "Proposals for raising a College of Industry, of all useful Trades and Husbandry with profit for the rich—a plentiful living for the poor—and a good education for youth—which will be advantage to the Government, by the increase of the people and their riches." He outlined a scheme for a community self-supporting and profit-making, in which men and women of all occupations should unite. By their industry he considered that they would not only be able to support themselves comfortably, but also to educate their children and to produce a sufficient profit for those whose capital had founded the community. A farm was also to be part of the plan, so that with the increase of industry there should also be more food available. He thought that in this way everyone would have constant employment and there would be a constant market for what was produced. It will be noticed that his motives were both industrial and educative. His industrial plans are based on the belief that it is labour and not money that is real worth. If labour were properly organized and distributed there would be enough for all. The poor would become industrious and temperate and their children would grow up into useful and happy citizens. In an introductory note addressed to the thinking and public-spirited, he says: "Christianity mends, but mars no man's good nature; it binding us to love our neighbour, and that love to desire our country's prosperity. And from that love do I meditate the public good, and publish these *Proposals* I think tends to it; believing there is many who would be glad to see the poor reformed in manners, and better provided for to live that will be willing to contribute their assistance with money, and advice towards it when opportunity shall be offered them." In his practical way he added addresses at

which those willing to give subscriptions should "enter them."[1]

In another paper addressed to Parliament in 1723 he suggested the development of home industries and the suppression of luxury trades. The latter he thought of fleeting value and not contributary to the permanent prosperity of the country. Through all Bellers's writings he shows his sympathy for the poor, and presses home upon the rich their responsibilities for those who are not as fortunate as themselves.

London Yearly Meeting considered his *Proposals* sympathetically, and recommended them to Quakers throughout England. They suggested that Friends might between them establish one College of Industry. Gloucestershire Quarterly Meeting, when John Bellers was resident within its bounds in 1701, thought of establishing a workhouse, but does not seem to have done so. London Friends, however, in the same year took over a workhouse at Clerkenwell and placed thirty inmates in it. These seem to have been aged poor still capable of a certain amount of employment. A few years afterwards boys were added to the establishment; they were given some education, but had to earn as much as they could. In 1707 boarders or pensioners were admitted, who apparently did not work and thought themselves superior to the other inmates. This plan of having pensioners had been part of Bellers's scheme, but in practice it seems to have caused a good deal of trouble.

The other inmates were mostly employed in spinning wool or cotton, or winding silk. Some were shoemakers, and sometimes oakum-picking was used as a form of punishment. A suggestion was made in 1712 that the place should be turned

[1] *Industry Brings Plenty. John Bellers' Scheme for a College of Industry*, 1696. Reprinted, London, 1916.

into a factory, but this was not done because the older inmates were too infirm, and the children stayed for too short a time. The institution was looked upon from this date rather as a hospital or nursery than as a workhouse. The old people and children continued for a long time to make yarn and mops. Conditions do not appear to have been very satisfactory; the organization was poor, and there were many complaints. On one occasion the committee asked that the children should get up at 5 a.m. the whole year round to make mops, but the Quarterly Meeting did not consent. Sewing and knitting were tried instead of spinning, but were discontinued because the produce did not cover costs. Gradually the education of the children became the prime object of the institution and its industrial aspect disappeared.[1]

As an experiment in industrial philanthropy the Friends' Workhouse in Bristol was more successful than that at Clerkenwell. From the first it aimed at the relief of the able-bodied poor. It was founded the year after John Bellers's *Proposals* were published, and also in the same year in which an Act of Parliament was passed to enable Bristol citizens to erect a public workhouse for the purpose of reducing the poor-rate. It was quite characteristic of Friends' determination to care for their own poor that they should in this way provide a parallel to public methods of relief. They would be unwilling to allow poor Friends to enter the city workhouse. In September 1696 the Bristol Men's Meeting, "being informed that divers poor Friend weavers, etc., are in some distress for want of work to employ themselves for a livelihood," appointed a committee to look into the matter and make proposals. A month later the plans were ready. An initial capital of two hundred pounds was obtained from

[1] *London Friends Meetings*, W. Beck and T. F. Ball, London, 1869, pp. 361–74, and records at Friends House.

legacies which had been recently left for the poor of the meeting, and it was to be spent as follows:

	£	s.	d.
The cost of six looms	12	0	0
A twisting mill	6	0	0
2 Furnaces for dyeing	15	0	0
Tubs and pails	1	0	0
A warping bar		15	0
4 Packs Worsted Yarn	100	0	0
A stock for wages	57	5	0
For dyeing stuff	8	0	0
	£200	0	0

One of the committee offered to give instruction in the art of dyeing, and two others undertook the business side of the venture. To ensure that the money left for the poor should not be imperilled by the possible failure of the scheme, thirty-seven Friends made promises amounting to £420 to make good any losses. The second £200 was soon needed, and the committee set about looking for a site for a suitable building; meanwhile the poor weavers seem to have been satisfactorily employed. The committee in charge were themselves mostly merchants and manufacturers, and everything was done in a business-like way. An agreement was made with George Chubb, serge-maker, of Barton Regis, Gloucestershire, to be Master or Foreman of the Workhouse. He was to have twelve shillings a week, three rooms "with a cellar in our Workhouse, rent free, and also three dozen candles every year with liberty to use our coal for washing and brewing for his own family but no otherwise." He was to provide work for the looms in the house and to "use his utmost diligence and endeavour" in attending to the looms and finishing the stuffs. He was to employ as journeymen or apprentices those recommended by the committee, but

not more than ten altogether. The committee were responsible for the feeding and clothing of the apprentices. The new building was ready in March 1700. A woman was appointed "to make beds, diet, wash, and clean such boys and children of Friends as shall be taken into the Workhouse." Poor Friends were persuaded to enter it by the simple means of refusing to continue paying their rents for them elsewhere.

For about twenty years the venture seems to have been successful, and further houses for the poor were built out of the profits. One of the secretaries of the workhouse committee was Alexander Arscott, a University man, who had become a Friend and was at the time a schoolmaster in Bristol; letters to him and others are in existence, and various papers of those who had charge of the undertaking. Annexed to some of the letters are samples of the goods sold. It is evident that although they wore drab colours themselves, Bristol Friends did not object to weaving bright colours. One order from Sunderland was for pieces which were to "be fine spinning and clear good colour and done with all the dispatch that's possible.

2 pieces plain black and white, fine.
1 piece black and white poplin, ditto.
1 piece to the red pattern.
1 piece to the other pattern.
1 piece plain a bright orange or gold colour and a light green and no other mixture.

[I] would have the warp the gold colour and struck with the green. Pray let the colours be very clean and the white in the black and white especially. Pray be exact to order." The patterns which are attached to this letter are still bright and clear; the material is a kind of rough woollen cloth called "cantaloon."

In 1720 it was decided that the then manager should be

allowed to undertake the entire responsibility for the business on condition that he employed any poor Friends that the committee recommended to him. He was to have a room in the Workhouse, the necessary utensils for his trade, and £100 lent to him free of interest. During its period of activity in Friends' charge the Workhouse had both provided employment for poor Friends and also contributed to the funds for the support of those who could not work.[1]

The final arrangements were more like those outlined by Thomas Lawson than those of John Bellers, who failed to get his economic schemes put fully into practice in his lifetime, although the present Quaker school at Saffron Walden traces its history back to the educational part of his *Proposals*.

The Society of Friends does not appear to have attempted any other venture in industrial philanthropy of a corporate nature among its own members. At the end of the eighteenth century some Quakers set on foot a scheme for a big social experiment in France. The leaders were Jean Marsillac, of Congénies, and Robert Grubb, of Clonmel, and they seem to have been backed by some English Friends. They applied in 1793 to the Council of the Department of Loire et Cher for leave to form in the great Castle of Chambord, schools of moral industry and establishments of agriculture, art, and commerce. They offered to educate free 150 children in morals, reading, writing, calculation, and work relating to agriculture, arts, or commerce; such as were suitable on attaining the age of 15 would, if it were wished, be kept as apprentices until they were 21, or, in the case of girls, married. Then the young man would be given 500 livres and the use of a house, yard, or garden suitable to his trade, rent free for ten years. The school would also be willing to take 300 paying pupils. In return for these

[1] Information about the Bristol Workhouse has been taken from the minute books of Bristol Men's Meeting, and from a book of papers relating to the Workhouse; all at the Friends Meeting House, The Friars, Bristol.

advantages to French children Friends asked to be given the Castle at half the estimated value, and that any who became Friends should be freed from the necessity of taking oaths and from military service. They intended to open there eighty or a hundred workshops, "new trades and particular cultures possessed until now only by England." The Minister of the Interior was most anxious to have the plan carried out, but there was local opposition, and the outbreak of the war between England and France rendered its fulfilment impossible.[1]

In the early years of the nineteenth century two Quakers were able to establish in England schools of industry and farm colonies similar to those proposed for France, but on a much smaller scale; that of James Cropper was near Warrington, and of William Allen at Lindfield in Sussex.

The most famous Quaker connected with the shipping industry on either side of the Atlantic was William Rotch; his work and testimony for peace in America, and his attempt to make a settlement of Friends at Dunkirk, led to his beginning a whaling industry at Milford Haven which must rank as an experiment in industrial co-operation. He and other Friends who had lost heavily by the American War of Independence came to Milford Haven in 1793. They built the quay there and some bakeries, and wanted to form an industrial colony. The causes of its failure belong to the nineteenth century, but there is still a Quaker remnant in the neighbourhood.

[1] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, VII. pp. 151–80.

CHAPTER IX

THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL QUAKERS

TO tell the story of the work of individual Friends in business and industry would take a very large volume. In this chapter only a few examples can be given of the way in which their Quaker principles affected them in their relations with their fellow traders, their customers, their employees, and the general public. Although most Friends were traders in small country towns, farmers, or handicraftsmen, a few even in the seventeenth century might have been considered capitalists. The woollen industry in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire was run on a capitalistic basis, and Friends there probably employed many workmen. We know that Anthony Sharp, who migrated from thence to Dublin, had five hundred employees in 1679; John Gurney, of Norwich, provided work for two hundred, and the petition already quoted tells of five hundred sergemakers of Plymouth impoverished by the imprisonment of their Quaker masters. Yet on the whole it was not until the next century that any industry except that of mining, and in some cases weaving, required much capital, or involved the employment of labour beyond that of the individual, his family, and one or two apprentices or journeymen.

It is of course very difficult to obtain exact information about the activities of hundreds of small traders and artisans living all over the British Isles two centuries and more ago. Yet some facts have already been given to show that these almost unknown men and women did contribute to industrial progress. The effect of their refusal to bargain and their

adherence to one price has been told in George Fox's words of how people at first refused to buy, but began to flock to the Quaker shops when it was realized that even a child might deal with them and be justly treated. William Edmundson records that Irish Friends had a similar experience. He says: "The keeping to one price in selling goods, and to the first asking without abatement, was a great stumbling-block to most sorts of people and made them stand at a distance from buying for some time until they saw further into the justice thereof."[1] William Stout, the Lancaster grocer, not only "detested" attracting other people's customers, but also asking "more for goods than the market price at one word, which seemed offensive to many who think they never buy cheap except they get abatement of the first price, which if answered, they will still insist on abatement; to whom I answered they should not tempt any to break their words. And I observed that such plain dealing obliged worthy customers and made business go forward with few words."[2]

In *The Complete English Tradesman*, Defoe suggests that Quakers of his day were not so strict as they had been about their refusal to bargain. He thought that a certain amount of liberty should be allowed to a seller to ask more than he would take, and wrote: "I know some people have condemned this practice as dishonest, and the Quakers for a time strictly stood to their point in the contrary practice, resolving to ask no more than they would take upon any occasion whatsoever and choosing rather to lose the selling of their goods, though they could afford sometimes to take what was offered, rather than abate a farthing of the price they had asked; but time and the necessities of trade have brought them a good deal off

[1] *Journal of William Edmundson*, p. 13.
[2] *Autobiography of William Stout*, p. 22.

that severity, and they by degrees came to ask, and abate, just as other honest tradesmen do, though not perhaps as those do who give themselves too great a liberty that way."[1] Probably Defoe was right about the laxer Friends, but the principle had been again confirmed not long before when Dublin Men's Meeting in 1710 reminded their members that they should not "ask one price and take another but keep to their word in buying and selling."

A Frenchman, De Saussure, travelling in England between 1725 and 1730, praises their honesty "and tells in illustration the story of a young dandy who went into a Quaker shop to buy some goods. He was so enraged when the merchant refused to bargain with him that even though the price was fair, he swore he would not buy at the price. Finding nothing suitable elsewhere he returned and asked for the cloth, but the Friend refused to sell it to him lest he should be guilty of causing the dandy to break his oath."[1] The development of the principle of the just price with which the great Quaker ironmasters were connected has had far-reaching effects. The Midland Association of Ironmasters was founded about 1762. Most of the members were Quakers; the families of Darby, Lloyd, Reynolds, Pemberton, Crowley, and Parker, who were in various branches of the industry, were related to each other by marriage and had a common interest in fixing the price of their products. Such co-operation was more unusual in the eighteenth century than it is now. These men were accustomed to meeting each other at the monthly and quarterly meetings of the Society of Friends for discussing matters of business connected with it, so it would be natural to them to talk over their own business matters together, and the desire to fix the real value of their wares was fully in accord with their

[1] *The Complete English Tradesman*, II. p. 234.

[2] Quoted in *Friends Historical Association Bulletin*, Philadelphia, Spring 1926, p. 38, from César de Saussure, *A Foreign View of England*.

principles.[1] Writing in 1789 (after his retirement from business) to his son Joseph, Richard Reynolds warned him to be careful when attending the quarterly meetings of ironmasters at Birmingham and Stourbridge, for he himself regretted having countenanced levity of conversation by sitting at the meetings longer than was absolutely necessary. Reynolds was a cultured man with many interests, so one wonders what these staid industrialists talked about of which he disapproved. His own firm and that of the Coalbrookdale Co., which he managed for some years, had a predominating influence in the smelting industry, yet his motto was "Live and let live," and he was always anxious not to take an unfair advantage of others. When the American War of Independence broke out, rather than become a profiteer he asked his customers to arrange a fair price for pig iron because its value had been greatly enhanced by the rise in the price of bar iron due to the war. The scale which was thus fixed was faithfully adhered to by Reynolds as long as he remained in the industry.[2]

The social life which developed within the Society of Friends, and frequent intermarriage, undoubtedly affected their business relations with each other. This, which is obvious in the story of the iron trade, is also illustrated in many a private letter of the period. Commercial, family, and sectarian interests were closely interwoven. Henry Taylor, shipbroker, of North Shields, writing to his cousin John Lecky, of Cork, tells him that through a mistake he has to sell at a loss a cargo of coal at Cork, and adds: "I should esteem it a favour if our Friends would assist in dispatching her by taking what quantity they can with convenience dispense with, in this service I doubt not

[1] In *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*, Mr. Ashton suggests that the relatively large amount of fixed capital required by ironmasters in the coke-smelting branch of the industry was a strong incentive for them to combine to maintain prices, but their co-operation may also have been influenced by their Quakerism.

[2] *Letters of Richard Reynolds*, p. 29.

but our valuable Friend James Abel will assist, give my dear love to him, to Cousin Susannah, her sister, thy brother and friends generally. . . ."[1]

It was not merely a casual interest that Friends took in each other's affairs, but that oversight which the Society as a whole exercised towards its members was also shared by the individuals composing it. This must have influenced the belief in the trustworthiness and honesty of Quakers.

William Stout's *Autobiography* gives a number of illustrations of the way in which he made himself responsible for his friends and relations. Henry Coward, to whom Stout was apprenticed, was a well-to-do ironmonger and grocer, "and very much respected and trusted not only by people of his own religious profession, but by all others, of all professions and circumstances, as well gentry as the most substantial yeomanry, and in appearance [had] a very beneficial trade. . . ."[2] However, he fell into careless ways and his wife was no help to him; when he lost the esteem of Friends they took away from him the conduct of the financial business which he had transacted for the Society. When he died, his former apprentice did all he could to help the widow. Before this had happened, Stout had given up his own business to his apprentice, and afterwards took on the management of another grocery for the widow of another of his friends. Then, when the apprentice to whom he had given his own business failed, Stout bought him out, because he felt it right to do what he could for the creditors. Much later in life he gave up his business again to a nephew, but he, too, failed, and again Stout stepped in and managed affairs until they were on satisfactory lines once more. Besides this he had given other relations capital on which to start. Yet this man who undertook so much financial responsi-

[1] From the original, dated 30th, 11mo, 1803.
[2] *Autobiography of William Stout*, p. 8.

bility for others had himself begun with a capital of only £120.

This personal and social interest easily developed into association for the purposes of trade. Long before the establishment of the Midland Association of Ironmasters, Quakers in Bristol had been co-operating in the brass industry. Benjamin Coole,[1] Edward Lloyd, Abraham Darby, Arthur Thomas, and the Champions were all members of the Bristol Brass Company, though Abraham Darby's move to Coalbrookdale severed his connection with it. The Company took an active part in the presentation to Parliament in 1711 of a petition against the importation of foreign brass. The petition stated that the Quaker firm could make as satisfactory goods as those imported from Holland. Though this was denied by other petitioners, it is evident that a combination of Quakers were much the largest manufacturers of brass and "battery" in England in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The tin for the manufacture of the brass was obtained from the Quaker mine-owners of Cornwall, who developed the mining industry there and were among the first to make use of Watt's steam-engines. Another Quaker company was mining for lead and silver in North Wales as early as 1704. Cornish Friends were closely in touch with the growing South Wales industries, and Bristol Friends, too, had both family and business connections with the Quaker ironmasters of Furness and of Shropshire, and with the manufacturers of "toys" and buttons in Birmingham.

Many of these Quaker industrialists were keenly interested in the problems of civic life, especially when they were able to share in the government of the town. Anthony Sharp, as well as being Master of the Weavers' Guild, was in James II's reign an active member of Dublin Corporation and instituted

[1] See pp. 51–3.

a plan for a workhouse in that city, and also one for improving the port.

A hundred years later John Hustler was occupying a somewhat similar position in Bradford, Yorkshire. That town owed to his public spirit its "Hall for the sale of worsted stuffs" and other improvements which started it on its road to prosperity. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal, which was due to his enterprise, provided water communication across England through the growing industrial regions. In 1764 he formed an Association of Worsted Manufacturers with a view to regulating the work of the spinners of wool. He wrote a pamphlet against the exportation of wool, and suggested that the Government should control the amount produced near the sea coasts.[1]

These eighteenth-century Quakers were not Free Traders. William Gibbons, of Bristol, and Richard Reynolds both took a prominent part in the resistance to the proposals for removing trade restrictions from Ireland, and their action resulted in the formation in March 1785 of the United Chamber of the Manufacturers of Great Britain. It is a pity that their information about Ireland seems to have given them an erroneous opinion of the probable effects of repealing the harsh and unjust laws against Irish manufactures which had been passed in the previous century. Had Richard Reynolds realized the great poverty in that country he must surely have taken a broader view. His letters to Lord Sheffield and to Lord Gower show that the welfare of the workers was his great motive. Writing to the former he deprecated taxes on raw materials or on manufactured goods because he considered they increased the cost of living for the workers and made the manufacturers compete for the foreign trade on disadvantageous terms.

[1] *The Society of Friends in Bradford*, H. R. Hodgson, Bradford, 1926, pp. 37, 38; and *To the Woollen Manufacturers, etc.*, J. Hustler, 1787, pp. 22–3.

Unfortunately association with one's fellow manufacturers has not always meant friendly relations with one's employees, but Quaker ironmasters seem to have practised both. Mr. Ashton remarks that "the more important chapters in the early history of the iron industry might have been written almost without passing beyond the bounds of the Society of Friends. At one time or other Quakers were to be found conducting iron works in each of the chief centres of production."[1] The one conspicuous exception which he mentions may fairly be quoted as an example of the influence of Quaker parentage. Though Sir Ambrose Crowley became a member of the Church of England, he was brought up as a Quaker. His father (also an Ambrose Crowley) was a prominent Friend and ironmaster at Stourbridge in the time of George Fox, and his sisters married other Quaker ironmasters. In the great industry carried on by Sir Ambrose Crowley and his son at Swalewell, near Newcastle, there were wage-earners working under factory conditions which were "surprisingly modern. In its integrated structure, its internal administration, its methods of insuring industrial peace, and even in such minutae as the provision of standardized gauges, the concern appears properly to belong to the twentieth rather than the seventeenth or eighteenth century." In the same industrial unit there were also many artisans working in their own homes with their own tools, but both classes had their hours and conditions of work carefully regulated. "Leisure no less than work was under paternalistic control. Surveyors were appointed to see that the standard of workmanship was maintained and it was their function also to inspect the shops and to advise the newcomers as to places of residence and work. Arbitration courts consisting of nominees of the firm and of the workers were set up to enquire into grievances; and contracts made between

[1] *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*, p. 213.

the master workmen and their hammer men were drawn up in these courts. Very early in the eighteenth century a system of contributary insurance against death, sickness, and old age was compulsory on all workers; and a doctor, a clergyman, and a schoolmaster were maintained jointly by the firm and its employees."[1]

These big firms were also responsible for the migration of workers. Many of the employees of the Crowleys came from Liège; the first Abraham Darby had Dutchmen in his works in Bristol, and their descendants to the fifth generation were employed in the Bristol Brass Works. Similarly the Rawlinsons in Furness had Irishmen working for them, and many Englishmen found their way to the Harfords' works at Ebbw Vale in South Wales. These men often had no money when they arrived and so the truck system was very usual. In unscrupulous hands it proved to the detriment of the men. Cases were known where, having worked for a firm for years, they left much in debt to it. But under good conditions the workmen benefited by being able to get what they wanted at a lower price than they could have bought it for themselves. The iron-works, too, were generally in places where provisions and other necessities were not easily obtainable.

The Rawlinsons had been engaged in iron-smelting in Furness long before they became Friends, and William Rawlinson, one of the earliest band of Quaker preachers, bought from the Fell family Force Forge from which some of their income had been derived. His son founded the Backbarrow Company, which co-ordinated the industry in Furness in the early part of the eighteenth century. Relations with customers and men were "always of the best," but seem to have included a superabundance of ale-drinking on every occasion on which a treat could be given! Other more useful gifts were sometimes

[1] *Iron and Steel*, etc., pp. 195, 196.

made. When Abraham Darby was struggling with his early experiments in the use of coke for smelting, he must have welcomed a present from the Rawlinsons of a quantity of iron-ore.

One undertaking by almost the last Quaker member of this firm was a precursor of the founding of the famous Carron Iron Works, which were started in 1736 with the help of workmen from Coalbrookdale. Nine years before this date Thomas Rawlinson had made an agreement, on behalf of himself and his partners, with John Macdonell to carry on the "trade, mystery and business" of making pig-iron and other iron at Invergarry. The iron-works thus established lasted until 1736. The chief object in starting them in such a remote situation was to ensure a plentiful supply of timber for charcoal, but the many disadvantages outweighed this advantage. Thomas Rawlinson seems to have been too generous and easy-going. He gave away a great deal in presents to the Highlanders, to the workmen, and to the soldiers of the neighbouring garrison; yet he was not tactful in his relations with the Macdonells. There was much difficulty in persuading the English workmen to stay so far from home; provisions were scarce, and though the firm had a truck shop it did not pay. Robbery and loss by fire and by flood hampered the enterprise. Besides all this, roads were primitive or non-existent, so that the cost of carriage of both the raw material and of the iron greatly added to the expense. One of the Highland chiefs with whom the Quaker made a contract for the carriage of iron-ore was Lochiel, famous a few years later as a loyal supporter of Prince Charles in the Forty-five.[1]

The Rawlinsons were relations of the Champions, who were the principal family connected with the brass manufacture in

[1] *The Early Iron Industry of Furness*, A. Fell, Ulverston, 1908, pp. 193–200, 343–89, etc.

the neighbourhood of Bristol during the eighteenth century. William Champion, who patented a number of inventions for making improvements in the methods of manufacturing brass, etc., had extensive works at Warmley, which are said to have been "probably the most up-to-date and efficient works in the country."[1] These Champions were not strict Friends. In 1764 they supported a project for building a new theatre in Bristol. Bristol Friends, as a whole, strongly opposed the scheme. Another Champion, Richard, the potter and friend of William Cookworthy, disapproved because of the "facility for amusement it afforded to the working classes." Not believing in the necessity for recreation for himself the Quaker could not see what good it could do to anyone else.[2]

The most famous firm connected with the iron industry in the eighteenth century was that of the Darbys of Coalbrookdale. The history of these Shropshire Quaker ironmasters has been given in some detail by Samuel Smiles in his *Industrial Biography*, and much more recently by Mr. Ashton in *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*. While Abraham Darby was still in Bristol he had with the help of another Friend, John Thomas, invented a better way of casting iron pots, by using sand instead of loam. He wanted his partners of the brass-works to extend the concerns, but as they were then unwilling to do so, he bought a small iron-works at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, and settled there about 1710. The district was so isolated and barren that until Darby started his works and gave employment the inhabitants scarcely ever had any money circulating among them, but carried on their exchanges in kind. Abraham Darby experimented successfully in the use of coal for smelting iron from the ore. For some reason this discovery did not become generally known until a generation later. His

[1] *The English Brass and Copper Industries to* 1800, H. Hamilton, London, 1926, p. 156.

[2] *Western Daily Press*, November 30, 1914.

Quaker caution and reserve were most probably one of the reasons of this. Another might have been the out-of-the-way situation of his works. He died when his eldest son, the second Abraham Darby, was only six years old. This son was also an experimenter. To overcome the shortage of water in dry weather he raised water to a higher level by means of a "fire-engine." This would be one of Newcomen's, for the Darbys made the parts of the engines for Newcomen as Wilkinson did for Watt. Abraham Darby II succeeded in making bar iron from pig iron made by means of pit-coal, but he refused to take out a patent for the invention, saying that he would not deprive the public of the benefit of it.

These two discoveries of the father and son were of incalculable influence in the development of the iron industry; for the country was becoming denuded of timber, and though previous attempts had been made to use pit-coal in smelting, they had not been successful, and the iron industry in England had languished. With its revival came the power to make machinery, which in its turn has completely changed industrial life, and indeed the life of the whole world.

It was with a definitely humanitarian aim that Abraham Darby II used wooden sleepers on the roads which he made for the wagons that drew coal and iron-ore from the mines to the furnaces. Previously the minerals had been carried on the backs of horses. A generation later Richard Reynolds, who was in the charge of the works, used iron instead of wood to give the men employment when the demand for iron was scarce; he thought that when needed, the rails could be taken up and converted to some other purpose. He is believed to have been the first to use iron for rails on roads.

The first two Abraham Darbys were active members of the Society of Friends; they were both preachers. The wives of the second and third of the name were also noted ministers.

Abiah Darby, the wife of Abraham Darby II, gives in her journals and letters much of the information already related about their inventions. She certainly did not neglect to make efforts for the spiritual well-being of her husband's employees and customers. Several times she records that when strangers who had come on business matters dined with them she felt it her duty to engage in vocal prayer or to exhort them. At other times she had meetings with the workmen. Under the date 18th, 5mo, 1764, she writes: "In the evening had my waggoners in to sit down with me and others; when I was engaged to exhort them and to inform them of the meaning of the great commandment to love the Lord above all, and our neighbour as ourselves."[1] That relations with those employed about the house were friendly may be inferred from the fact that a visitor writing afterwards sends "dear love to thy daughter and to the honest Welsh woman if she be with you and . . . also to thy maltman's wife."

When Abraham Darby II died, his son-in-law, Richard Reynolds, took charge at Coalbrookdale and its allied works, as well as his own at Horsehay and Ketley in the same neighbourhood. He came from Bristol and had married Hannah Darby. For many years his home was a favourite halting-place of travelling Friends and of any who were interested in culture and philanthropy. He was for a time Clerk of London Yearly Meeting, and by his lavish but well-organized generosity earned the title of "The Philanthropist." For his employees he laid out walks in the woods of the Manor of Madeley which he purchased, and their children were invited into his own garden to eat fruit. He built houses for the workmen even faster than they were needed. He gave with them grants of land in plots of about one-eighth of an acre, at five guineas purchase money, for a lease of 99 years, and five shillings a year ground rent.

[1] MSS. Journal at Friends House.

He co-operated affably with the clergymen in the district, and built schools, even going so far as to pay the parents to send their children to be taught. He realized the evil effects of intemperance on industry, and in 1782 succeeded in getting the local magistrates to diminish the number of licensed houses, and to enforce the laws against drunkenness; he also tried to get the custom of paying wages in public-houses forbidden.

He was much concerned that barges were then towed up the Severn by human strength, and attempted to obtain powers to make a horse towing-path, but failed to do so. When two of his workmen carried the Darbys' series of inventions farther by using pit-coal for making bar iron from pig iron he insisted on the invention being patented in their names rather than take any advantage for the firm for it. Their invention was, however, soon afterwards superseded by that of Henry Cort.

Shortly before his marriage there were food riots in the neighbourhood of the works, and he was instrumental in petitioning for the pardon of four of the workmen who had been "drawn into the riot by threatenings of others, and perhaps with a view to procure subsistence for their starving families."[1] In a letter to her aunt, Hannah Darby gives more details of these riots. The colliers, who were always an independent class, attacked the markets in the district and began to plunder houses. Only a few of the Coalbrookdale workmen joined them. They soon visited the Darbys' house: "They behaved pretty civil, only asking for meat and drink, which we were glad to give them to keep them quiet. They threatened that they would destroy the Dale Works if our men would not join them the next day to go to Wellington Market, to prevent which my Father gave one of the clerks twenty guineas to have given to the ringleaders had they offered such a thing but they did not. He also deputed some of our men to

[1] MS. in Friends House.

stand with money in their hands to give them at our lower gate, to prevent them coming up to the house for fear of frighting my Mother. Where they were to have drink this did with a few, but the numbers increased so fast that they all came running up like wild things. We employed several men in carrying pailfuls of drink." On another occasion they again visited the house and several hundreds were given food and drink. "We baked bread three days together, and sent several miles for it besides, for there was not a bit of bread or of corn to be had for money, for some miles about, so that the country was in the greatest distress."[1]

The gentlemen of the neighbourhood overcame the hungry mob, and the Quakers' houses where force had been met by kindliness were not plundered as others had been.

At the end of the eighteenth century the Harfords, another Bristol Quaker family, bought iron-works in Monmouthshire. Near by was a long row of workmen's cottages and one of the owners lived in the centre one, which was distinguished from the others by a clock and the bell. In 1796 they bought the Ebbw Vale Works, which remained under Quaker control for half a century. They made careful agreements with their workmen. The first contains the following provisions, among others: "Richard Walters further engages that whatever lodgers he may take into his house he will receive no more than sixpence a week from any one such lodger for his bed or more than one shilling for a man and his wife, lodging for their bed. Nor will he on any pretence sell beer or other liquors to any persons whatever at any time under a penalty of five guineas each time on being discovered by one or more persons on their oath before a Justice of the Peace."[2] No licensed houses were allowed on the land of the company, and each

[1] *Reynolds-Rathbone Diaries*, ed. Mrs. E. Gregg, 1905, p. 184.

[2] *Ebbw Vale Magazine*, December 1925, Art. reprinted from *Welsh Outlook* March 1925.

row of houses which they built had communal wash-houses and bake-houses. Surrounding land was bought up and let to the miners and to tenants, who undertook to provide horses for the transport of the goods. The firm was careful that everything supplied should be of good quality, and insisted that what was supplied to them, including the food for the horses, should be first-class too.

Though the hours of work in these employments would now seem long and the wages low, Mr. Ashton says, with reference to the Quaker firms: "These conditions exhibit substantial improvements over those prevailing in a model factory at an earlier period; and they contrast very favourably also with the hours of toil required to wring subsistence earnings from domestic nailmaking."[1] Besides the wages there were many perquisites. At Ebbw Vale the agents had grazing for their horses and cows, and even some help from the company's servants in their homes. They had also corn, coal, and wood from the company's stores. "The Harfords managed their iron-works on a system of benevolent despotism. It was a business-like system and an honest—even though limited—consideration was extended to their workpeople. Unadulterated and harsh despotism prevailed at neighbouring works, where a munitioned fort existed for the manager's retreat in case of riots, which were frequent. Throughout the period of Quaker control at Ebbw Vale there were no riots of this kind."[2]

Two other Quaker firms in Wales were long known as kindly employers. This was true of the Hanburys of Pontypool, who had had almost a monopoly in the making of wire long before they became Friends in the seventeenth century. The development of the town of Pontypool was chiefly due to the Quaker members of the firm.

[1] *Iron and Steel, etc.*, p. 194.
[2] *Ebbw Vale Magazine*, December 1925, p. 18.

The Neath Abbey Engineering Works, started by members of Quaker families which had been for many years engaged in the mining industry in Cornwall, was also noted for its high principles. Its history belongs rather to the nineteenth century than to the previous one, for it was not founded until 1798, but the work turned out there had a world-wide reputation for excellence of standard which the workmen attributed to the Quaker principles of the owners.

Enough has now been related to show that Quaker firms who employed a large number of people in the various metal trades showed consideration for them and took a kindly interest in them. Similar information about those engaged in the old-established textile manufactures is not so easy to find. There are indications, however, that where Friends were engaged in these they maintained the Quaker reputation for honesty and accuracy and were considerate for the well-being of others. Men like Anthony Sharp in Dublin, the Gurneys in Norwich, and John Hustler in Bradford, were leaders in the industry in their own districts. They were philanthropic also, as were others with smaller means. Robert Foster, a Northumbrian farmer living near Hebblethwaite, built a small mill for spinning coarse yarn to give employment to the poor families in the neighbourhood "to raise their condition." He employed others "at their own houses by knitting the yarns into large stockings such as were worn by men engaged in the Greenland fishery."[1]

The principal Quaker families in the West of England woollen trade for more than two hundred years have been those of the Weres and Foxes at Wellington. In the eighteenth century they were sergemakers having extensive business with the Continent; they were careful to keep well within their

[1] *Society of Friends in Newcastle*, J. W. Steel, London, 1899, p. 113.

means, to ensure very high standard in the goods sent out, and to maintain friendly relations with their customers and employees.[1] Such qualities as these must surely have been a cause of the longevity of so many Quaker firms in the metal and textile industries, and similar examples could be given from other trades.

Messrs. Allen and Hanbury are the successors of the Bevans who carried on a pharmacy in London founded in 1715. In the history of the firm which has just been published it is said that, "The work of Silvanus and Timothy Bevan had settled the pharmacy at Plough Court on the lines of its future conduct and development. Silvanus Bevan had concentrated on the provision of drugs of a good quality, sold at a fair price, and had stamped the business with his own characteristic sense of justice and honesty. His brother Timothy not only carried on this tradition, but began the development of a foreign connection on the same lines. Joseph Gurney Bevan, by developing the business on both these lines, prepared the way for its growth under his famous successor William Allen and its even greater growth in later years."[2]

Joseph Gurney Bevan's business letters show that his Quakerism, and especially his insistence on truth and accuracy in word and action, led him to sell the best drugs, to charge a fair, although it might be a high, price for them, and to expect his customers to be prompt in their payments. He, like some other Friends, was unwilling to recover debts by law proceedings.[3] With reference to such a case he wrote: "I have long been of opinion that the precepts of the gospel must be re-

[1] *The Woollen Manufacture at Wellington, Somerset*, J. H. Fox, London, 1914.

[2] *Plough Court. The Story of a Notable Pharmacy*, 1715–1927, compiled by E. C. Cripps, p. 16.

[3] "I never sued any debtor; and to lose all was more satisfaction to me than getting all to the great cost of my debtor, and to the preservation of my reputation." *Autobiography of William Stout*, p. 46. John Woolman was another who avoided taking legal action against his debtors.

garded in our dealings with one another as well as in our creeds, if we expect them to be availing to us."[1]

Robert Plumstead also conducted his business on principles of accuracy and punctuality. He writes: "I may venture to say everything goes from my warehouse in neat good order. I wish it was in my power to have goods get to hand in the same manner." And again: "'It's impossible to prevent little errors and though I am critically exact in general yet I never pretended to be infallible.' He set his face strongly though without much success against 'the pernicious habit of giving such long credit,' urging that 'it will never answer in a large trade and small capital.' More than once he writes that he does not want to increase his business, unless with houses that are unexceptional in the matter of punctual payment. Unfortunately, however, he was brought into business relations with men whose views were very different from his own. To such persons he wrote in terms of strong reproach, brushing away excuses with a relentless hand, and showing an honest man's scorn for a shuffler."[2] Many of the Quakers who became rich obtained a reputation for firmness which might seem at times to border on unscrupulousness in their financial dealings with others,[3] but this seems to me to have often been due to an excess of accuracy to which those with whom they were dealing were unaccustomed. The fact remains that Quakers maintained and increased their reputation for trustworthiness and honesty throughout the eighteenth century; though there were always some people ready to find fault with their business methods, Thomas Clarkson's suggestion, that this was because a higher standard was expected from them than from other people, seems to meet the case.

[1] *Plough Court*, p. 18 *n.*

[2] *English Historical Review*, January 1916, p. 142.

[3] See, for instance, Charles Lamb's story at the end of his essay on "Imperfect Sympathies" (*Essays of Elia*).

Undoubtedly one of the causes why Quakers increased in wealth was that the money which they earned by steady application to work was not wasted by them. Apart from their interest in the Society of Friends they had few attractions outside their business. Some shared in the recreations of the time, but these were usually men whose Quakerism did not affect them deeply. The Quaker merchants and manufacturers did not desire to enter the peerage, or to marry their sons into it. Though they lived comfortably they did not live extravagantly, so the profits they made remained in the business and brought increasing success to it. If they did mix in the ordinary society of the day it was more than probable that the next generation of the family left Friends, and though they might carry on Quaker standards for a time in their firm's work, the influence of living Quakerism would be gone. Class distinctions were much more marked then than they are now, and just because rich Quakers did not set up to be more than they were, they were often respected and liked by members of the aristocracy.[1]

On the other hand, they were trusted by the poor and by those with small means. I believe that the thought of the real worth of every human soul which lies so near the heart of the Quaker message made the true Quaker shopkeeper take a more living interest in those that came to buy from him, and those who were employed by him, than did others who did not hold these views. Little incidents could be related which show how their kind-hearted friendliness must have endeared them to their customers. Simple country folk appreciated their honesty and entrusted their small savings to their care, knowing that they would be treated fairly. It is not unusual at the present day for a poor person, especially in the country, to hide cash about the house rather than lodge it in the bank, and two hundred years ago it must have been a common practice,

[1] See, for example, *Letters of R. Reynolds*, p. 269, letter to Lord Sheffield.

as there were no banking facilities outside London then. A man accustomed to keep his bag of money where he could easily get it would be suspicious of giving it in charge to anyone unless he thoroughly trusted and esteemed him. Farming and weaving, the two great industries of England in the seventeenth century, are both employments in which a regular income is impossible. The farmer depending on the seasons of the year may have money to lend at one time and need a loan at another. Similarly, the weaver needs capital to buy wool or yarn and has to stand out of his money until the cloth is made. Everyone prefers to deal in money matters with a man whose character is straightforward and above reproach. Hence arose the Quaker connection with banking.

The Quakers were friendly to all classes and respected. Their capital grew both through their own endeavours and because others trusted them, and then they lent money to those in need and so became bankers. Some few took to banking merely through the development of their own businesses. Thomas Fox, of Wellington, began to pay farmers for their wool in notes, to avoid having to keep upwards of £1,000 in cash in the house, and from this grew the banking business of Fox, Fowler & Co., of Wellington. Two of the largest banking combines in England at the present day are of Quaker origin, and have absorbed into themselves tens of private banks founded by other Quakers. Most of them, however, did not come into being as banks until the very end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth; a few are of earlier foundation.

The Gurneys had lent money from the time of James I, and members of the family had been Friends from the time of George Fox. They were engaged in the woollen industry, and as has been already stated, the imprisonment of John Gurney caused distress among the weavers of Norwich. Besides being

master weavers they acted as woolstaplers; they bought wool in Ireland, distributed it to the spinners, collected the yarn and supplied it to the weavers. In these transactions they were dealing with those who had little or no capital who had to wait a long time for the return on their outlay. The Gurneys themselves later attributed the foundation of their prosperity to the fact that "in the course of their dealing with the worsted spinners for their yarn, this family began to supply them with cash to pay the wages of labour, and enable them to carry on their operations in business."[1]

John Gurney, the son of the John Gurney who had been imprisoned, was an active Quaker, and a preacher when only twenty-two years of age. He was a personal friend of Sir Robert Walpole, who offered him a seat in Parliament because of his able defence of the Norwich woollen trade before a Parliamentary Committee. He would not accept it because it involved taking an oath, and he probably appreciated more the title of "The Weavers' Friend" which was given him spontaneously by his fellow citizens. His two sons opened their bank in 1775.

As the Gurneys and Foxes passed from the woollen trade to the banking business, so Lloyds Bank had its origin in the iron industry; Barclays developed from the linen drapery of David Barclay in London; the Backhouses were linen and worsted manufacturers in Darlington; and the Bevans were a younger branch of the family who owned the pharmacy.

Two other Quaker characteristics were suitable ones for bankers. They were caution and silence. Quaker bankers could be trusted to keep their clients' secrets, and to weigh circumstances fairly. They were not adverse to lending money to likely young men, and success in the industrial world was sometimes due to a timely loan from a Quaker. Thus James

[1] *Annals of an East Anglian Bank*, p. 24.

Watt's invention might not have been a commercial success had it not been that Sampson Lloyd was liberal in his treatment of the firm of Boulton and Watt.

Hitherto we have been considering the Quaker as an employer or capitalist; I must only refer to the Quaker connection with the cocoa trade since the beginning of the eighteenth century and to the fact that there were Quaker firms in the cotton industry in Lancashire at the end of the same century. But, numerous as the Quaker employers were, one must not forget how many Quakers were in service to others, whether in domestic, industrial, or commercial life.

Unfortunately employees seldom put their thoughts and experiences on paper, so that it is difficult to get direct information about them. John Kelsall was clerk to three families of Quaker ironmasters, Darbys, Lloyds, and Peytons; his diaries[1] show him to have been loyal to them and one who endeavoured to make the work of the firm his chief interest. He would talk on religious matters with a visitor on business, and was anxious for the moral improvement of the workmen to whom he paid wages. On one occasion, when returning home on May Day, he stopped on a village green to reason with the maypole makers on the Pagan origin of the custom.

The life of the Quaker maid in domestic service was hardly an enviable one, for the recommendation to the master to see that the servant made a profitable use of his or her leisure was sometimes translated into a restriction of that time. Mary Peisley felt that the drudgery of domestic service deprived her of full liberty to exercise her gift as a preacher; Sarah Lynes also found her gift hampered under similar circumstances.

Dorothy Gott, whom Joseph Smith characterizes as a "well-meaning though weak-minded woman," seems to think that a number of the cases of Quaker girls marrying outside

[1] MSS. at Friends House.

the Society were due to the hardships of their employment. She writes: "Consider the disadvantages Friend servants labour under in this particular. . . . Though [in] a Friend's family perhaps your fellow-servants are not Friends; which was my case; and they seldom like you to go out except to meeting, and that no oftener than they can help. . . . I do not say it is the case in general though too much so in that society. These things make servants weary of service and even of their lives; . . . for it makes them do anything to get from under that bondage, so they fall into worse errors."[1] She certainly did, for she married a non-Quaker footman, who took to drink.

Besides his interest in his fellow men, whether customers, employees, or others, the Quaker's principles inculcated in him that love of truth and accuracy which is a necessary foundation for scientific success. Many famous Quaker names are connected with the Royal Society and with pioneer work in medicine, botany, and other branches of science; the same causes must have produced the long series of inventions in the industrial world which were made by members of the Society of Friends. Those of the Darbys have already been shown to have contributed largely to the industrial progress of England in the eighteenth century. Allusion must now be made to others.

The Quaker instinct for accuracy found itself at home in the intricacies of watchmaking. The most famous watchmakers of this period were Friends: "men whose names are still household words to the craft and whose signatures . . . are eagerly accepted by collectors as guarantees of sound workmanship and of extraordinary excellence even now".[2]

Before the time of Daniel Quare, watchmaker to William III

[1] *The Midnight Cry, etc.*, D. Gott, London, 1788, p. 3.
[2] *Behind my Library Door*, G. C. Williamson, London, 1921, p. 152.

and to George I, Edward East had been watchmaker to Charles II; he was also Master of the Clockmaker's Company, and made a gift to it of £100 for the benefit of poor members. Thomas Tompion, his contemporary, has been called "the father of English watchmaking," and his apprentice, George Graham, was noted for the extreme accuracy and beauty of the many scientific instruments which he made, including the original orrery for Lord Orrery. A more notable Quaker than the last was Thomas Wagstaffe, whose long clock-cases were especially valued in America. Benjamin Huntsman also began as a watchmaker, but his desire to make better springs for his watches led him to make a series of experiments in the casting of steel. His discoveries were the means of laying the foundation of the greatness of the steel industry in Sheffield. He was a strict Friend, refused to have his portrait painted, and also rejected the offer of a Fellowship in the Royal Society. Skilled in surgery he would not take any payment for his services. He conducted his scientific experiments with great secrecy; it is not exactly known when he discovered the method of making the kind of steel with which his name is associated. The Sheffield workmen at first refused to use his steel, so he exported it. The foreign goods made from it were pronounced so infinitely superior to those then being made in Sheffield that in the end the English manufacturers had to buy from him. He and his sons were so little anxious to advertise and defend themselves that a report on their steel, issued in 1792, says: "He has so far neglected his own interest and credit as never to give to the public . . . any account whatever of his steel. . . . Huntsman has suffered much by some manufacturers . . . unfairly making use of his stamp."[1]

William Cookworthy was another Friend with scientific training and interests who contributed to industrial progress.

[1] *Story of the English Towns: Sheffield*, J. S. Fletcher, London, 1919, p. 75.

He discovered that the clay from which Chinese porcelain was made was to be found in large quantities in Cornwall. He had been trained in the pharmacy of the Bevans and seems to have carried on experiments for twenty years before he took out a patent. After six years' trial in Plymouth his china-factory was moved to Bristol, where Richard Champion superintended it. Champion afterwards moved it to Staffordshire. Neither Champion's family "nor Cookworthy's ever received any benefit from the important art and industry which they had been the means of establishing."[1]

Unlike Cookworthy, Thomas Allgood, of Pontypool, did not give the secret of his discovery to the public, and with the last member of the family it was lost in 1848.[2] The lacquer of his Japan ware has retained its lustre for over two hundred years and is of such superior quality that it can stand the test of fire.[3]

From the earliest days of Quakerism many Friends had been shipowners and shipmasters, especially in Whitby, Scarborough, and other Yorkshire ports.[4] John Woolman was much grieved over the hard life of the sailors even in a ship of which the master was a Friend, and he thought that overseas traffic could scarcely keep itself clear of the contaminations of the slave trade; yet there must have been many other Quaker shipmasters besides Thomas Chalkley,[5] who had a real desire for the welfare of their crew. One such was Henry Taylor, of North Shields, even before he became a Friend in 1778. He writes: "I always kept up a strict discipline without severity. I taught my boys to fear the Almighty, to love one another, to avoid lying, swearing, and to copy after the most expert seamen, . . .

[1] *William Cookworthy*, p. 45.

[2] Its supposed rediscovery has been recently reported.

[3] See *Quakers in Wales*, T. Mardy Rees, Carmarthen, 1925, p. 254.

[4] James Cook, the explorer, served his apprenticeship in a ship owned by Quakers, and perhaps it was in this way that he learned to be just to natives and to care for his crew.

[5] See p. 122.

and on every general call to endeavour to be foremost. Among the seamen I discouraged drunkenness, quarrelling, and swearing, so that those disorders so common in most ships were rarely seen or heard of in that which I commanded. Whenever I got any new men I took an early opportunity to inform them that I admitted no cursing, swearing, or the like in my ship; that I would as long as they sailed with me treat them with tenderness and humanity; but unless they governed themselves by the rules which I had prescribed, I would take the first opportunity of discharging them; and it was very remarkable that however much such seamen had been addicted to such practices they forbore them while they sailed with me without any apparent constraint put upon them."[1]

After he had left the seafaring life and settled at North Shields as a shipbroker he spent time and money, to the detriment of his own commercial prospects, in trying to get lights erected at certain places on the East Coast, like the Goodwins, where there was great danger to shipping. He had a long struggle to get Trinity House to adopt his proposals, and got no financial benefit from them himself.

[1] *Memoirs of Henry Taylor*, N. Shields, 1811, p. 11.

CHAPTER X

THE CHARACTER OF THE QUAKER BUSINESS MAN

THIS chapter must be one of summary and may involve some repetition of what has been already written. I have given some facts relating to Quakers in industry, but am conscious that they are far from covering the whole ground. Our knowledge of their characteristics may be supplemented by reference to the opinions expressed by their contemporaries. A pamphlet about Henry Taylor, having praised his disinterestedness, concludes: "He was for a very great length of time a highly respected and much looked up to member of that amiable and enlightened society called Quakers; like many of them his ears were ever open to the tale of misery and distress, and it was well known he would readily share his last shilling with the sons and daughters of human suffering." Such remarks are typical of many obituary notices of Friends found in public journals; even if they are too flattering, they tend to show the qualities in the Quaker character which appealed to others. Of John Hustler, for example, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1790, says: "Very early in life he distinguished himself as a man of great public spirit. Wise, benevolent, and indefatigable, he was ever ready zealously to promote the interests of mankind. . . . Of an undaunted mind and supported by the rectitude of his intention he dreaded not the shafts of malevolence which ever attend distinguished merit. . . . He was of a cheerful disposition and steady in his friendships, charitable to the poor, an affectionate husband, a tender father,

and a kind master."[1] With this may be compared an account of Joshua Strangman, of Dublin, taken from Binnie's *Chronicle*: "The public benefits which the labours of his life conferred on the community at large and the affectionate esteem which is indelibly on the hearts of all to whom he was known, terms that comprehend the circle of the most eminent and virtuous men of his time, are the best and most valuable memorials of his excellence and fame. His knowledge of commerce, especially as it regarded the interest of his country, was extensive and profound, and the journals of the Irish Legislature will convey to posterity the records of various important improvements in trade which wisdom and experience enabled him to suggest. His attention to the concerns of this city . . . was distinguished by the most ardent and active feelings of benevolence which exerted itself . . . in relieving indolence and promoting happiness. Those with whom he was engaged in the transactions of trade reposed the most implicit confidence in his integrity. . . ."[2]

In spite of the journalese, one can distinguish that what attracted attention with regard to these men were benevolence, integrity, independence of character, and a disinterested public spirit. This good opinion had spread to France by the time of the Revolution. When Jean Marsillac and Robert Grubb were negotiating about the Castle of Chambord, the French Minister of the Interior wrote to the President of the National Convention with glowing hopes of the benefits that the settlement of the Quakers in the country would bring to France. He described them as devoted to work, to benevolence, to reflection, and accustomed from infancy to practising virtues too much neglected among themselves. He hoped that their works, as well as their good examples, would soon have the happiest influence on the whole Republic.[3]

[1] *Friends in Bradford*, p. 39–40.
[2] *Journal of Friends Historical Society*, XV. p. 104.
[3] *Ibid.*, VII. p. 166.

The best contemporary description which we have of the eighteenth-century Quaker, from one who was not himself a Friend, is Thomas Clarkson's *Portraiture of Quakerism*. His close association with Friends in the anti-slave trade campaign gave him admission to their homes and an intimate knowledge of the well-concerned Friends which few others had at the time. He made a careful study of their occupations. "If it be a charge," he says, "against the members of this Society that they are eager in the pursuit of wealth, let it be at least mentioned in their favour, that, in their accumulation of it, they have been careful not to suffer their knowledge to take advantage of the ignorance of others, and that they have kept their hands clear of the oppression and of the blood of their fellow creatures."[1]

In the earlier part of the century there had been some Quakers connected with the slave trade, or with some commerce dependent upon it. London Yearly Meeting of 1763 had spoken strongly against Friends giving encouragement "in any shape" to it, and through the work of Woolman and others the Society had been made alive to the evils of slavery.

Clarkson's criticism that Friends were eager in the pursuit of wealth is the most serious and most frequent one made of them in the eighteenth century. It was, in a sense, their virtues which gave to some Friends' families a superabundance of this world's goods. As apprentices they were trained to industry under careful supervision, they were frequently being cautioned against running into debt and warned to avoid trading beyond what they could afford. The love of accuracy, which was inculcated in them, made them cautious of dealing with those who would not pay them promptly, and their dislike of legal proceedings acted in the same way. Added to this were the results

[1] *Portraiture of Quakerism*, T. Clarkson, 3rd ed., 3 vols., London, 1807, Vol. II. p. 40.

of the policy of restraint and moderation which I have already described. Their savings accumulated, or went into their business capital. Some Friends, however, must have spent a great deal on their dress, on the furniture of their houses and on their general style of living. It has been noted that Quaker families who become wealthy by trade and industry, after a few generations either part with their wealth or lose their Quakerism. The families which have remained Quaker since the seventeenth century are mostly those which though perhaps comfortably off have never become really wealthy. Clarkson quotes a number of examples of Friends who had limited their trade because they did not feel a certain branch of it consistent with their religious profession, and I have mentioned others in a previous chapter.

Clarkson also thought that agriculture was the occupation most suited to Quakers, and regretted that they were migrating to the towns. The country affords special advantages for those who seek calmness and quietude, and for the exercise of the Quaker's peculiar love of the animal creation. "What man has ever shown a proper affection for the brute creation, who has been backward in his love to the human race?" He then continues: "I stated . . . that some of the Quakers, though these were few in number, were manufacturers and mechanics; that others followed the sea; that others were to be found in the medical profession, and in the law; and that others were occupied in the concerns of a rural life. I believe with these few exceptions, that the rest of the Society may be considered as engaged in trade."[1]

He gives in detail the regulations which the Society had made with regard to the conduct of its members in trade, and says that since the Quakers are such a "highly professing people" the world expects more of them than of others, and so

[1] *Portraiture of Quakerism*, II. pp. 52–3.

criticizes them more if they do not live up to the standard they have set for themselves. Therefore there are certain occupations in which a Quaker should not engage. In the first place, those which are productive of evil. He instances the trade of a distiller or wine merchant, or the maker of weapons of war.[1] Secondly, a Quaker cannot encourage the sale of an article which may prove harmful; so Quaker tailors, booksellers, and silversmiths, etc., should not sell anything which they think may be injurious to the moral character of the recipient, by encouraging him in unworthy pursuits, or in the love of luxury. Clarkson does not think a consistent Friend could be a cotton manufacturer under the circumstances then existing, when so much of the work was done by poor parish children under very evil conditions. He states that the peculiar costume worn by Friends, and their unusual methods of speech and address, attracted an undue amount of attention to them, especially if they were rich and engaged in public affairs.

But after all it is impossible to describe an average Quaker business man. There were Friends at the end of the eighteenth century in almost every branch of commercial and industrial service, from the rich man in his mansion to the poor man at his gate, and these were every one of them attached to Quakerism in varying degrees. Some were strict Friends, punctilious in following in every particular what they believed to be the implications of their Quaker faith. Others were nominal followers of traditional Quakerism and still retained the outward symbols. Others again had disregarded the Quaker garb and speech whilst clinging to their membership in the Society; whilst some who retained the name of Friend showed neither outwardly nor inwardly much sign of really holding Quaker principles. The main body of the Society were those who had

[1] As beer was then considered a wholesome drink there were a number of well-known Quaker breweries like those of the Barclays, Grettons, etc.

adopted the habits and customs peculiar to it, and who tried to abide by the rules which were laid down by the body as a whole. Such teaching as they received in their meetings for worship and through their reading was deeply mystical in tendency; the connection between life and religion was not forgotten, for particular stress was laid on the necessity for upholding the standard of truth which they believed had been passed on to them from their spiritual fathers.

The community sense was strongly developed. Any deviation by an individual from the ideal set was said to reflect discredit on the Society of Friends as a whole. Hence even if his own faith was not very strong a Quaker might hesitate before incurring the censure of his fellow members. It must not be wondered at, therefore, that human weakness sometimes shrank from exposure and adopted a cloak of hypocrisy; but that such was frequent among Friends is not likely. They could not have gradually acquired and afterwards retained the high opinion which their contemporaries had of them, if they had not been, on the whole, men and women whose characters were such as others took them to be. During the hundred and fifty years under review the public estimation of the Quaker trader seems to have grown steadily more appreciative.

Quaker meetings for worship and those for the business affairs of the Society were democratic in their nature. Masters and servants, employers and employees met on a basis of equality. In such meetings the Quaker employer may well have learnt to respect employees as men and not merely as hands, and he may have carried over into his conferences with other employers the spirit of calmness and of careful judgment to which he had been trained in the discussion of Church affairs. Clarkson noticed that independence of character and the superior mental ability of the Quaker poor, due probably to their sharing in the organization of the Society and to the

fact that they were almost always able to read and write and had some knowledge of the contents of the Bible. Such training would make a Quaker employee better able than others to consider the interests of his master, and to share in his desire to ensure good workmanship.

These monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings for discussion; the epistles sent from place to place; the fact that the spiritual gifts of even the poorest servant girl were recognized and acknowledged; all ought to have developed in the individual an absence of class feeling and a breadth of interest which would react favourably on his attitude towards those with whom he had economic relations.

What, then, were the underlying principles which influenced the Quaker of one or two hundred years ago in his attitude towards industry? He set himself a high ideal and did not always live up to it, but he acted on a principle of life which determined his economics and ethics.[1] The qualities which men saw in him were the result of his inner life. They were living and not mechanical; for the conduct based on dependence on God's constant guidance has a life within it which is not found in one based on ethical and moral considerations alone. The Quaker tried to look on life as a whole and all for the service of God. Unlike his contemporaries he did not separate his economics from his religion. Hence he had a certain detachedness of mind which made him appear independent of public opinion, and usually progressive rather than conservative.

In 1685, when other Protestants in Ireland were antagonistic

[1] George Crosfield, of Lancaster, entered into partnership with others as sugar refiners in 1799. His comment on this step in his diary is: "My mind has been very deeply exercised on the occasion . . . ambition or the love of money have had very little influence over my heart or mind, having always preferred content and peace. Sincerely believing this change of residence would be for the best, I trust and hope we shall witness the favour of Providence." From *Progress*, Lever Bros. Magazine, January 1928, p. 20.

to the new corporations, mostly composed of Catholics, which James II had formed, Quakers joined them and worked heartily with them. Forty years later a young Quakeress, Mary Tuke, of York, quietly defied the powerful York Merchant Adventurers Company for seven years until finally they had to allow her to trade as a tea dealer. After another hundred years had passed, Friends were instrumental in getting the power of the guilds abolished in Dublin because they no longer served a useful purpose. These three examples, all relating to the guilds, illustrate the way in which Quakers by their independence kept abreast of the changes in the industrial system, or perhaps a little ahead of them.

The belief in the possibility of the guidance of God for himself and for everyone made the Friend try to treat others fairly as fellow brethren in the family of God. This, too, made him sympathetic towards those whose circumstances in life were harder than his own, and more careful how he used the good things which were in his possession. In 1740, when the spiritual temperature of the Society of Friends was at a low point, William Cookworthy wrote as follows to his brother, who was leaving home for China: "Thou art now . . . about to leave thy relations for some time and thy interest must be entirely under the regulation of Providence and thy own conduct. I have no suspicion but thou wilt manage thy worldly affairs with prudence and circumspection. Yet even in regard to them, don't think this sufficient, as all events and the most minute circumstances and relations of things are under the direction of the Author of Nature. That human wisdom is the greatest folly which sets out on its own bottom, and has no reliance but on itself. Let therefore the fear of God be the ground and centre of all thy conduct; and square all thy measures and pursuits agreeably to the principle of eternal truth within thy own heart, which leads to this beginning and

perfection of Wisdom. If thou thus honestly endeavour to make the God of all the world thy Friend however His Providence may see meet to dispose of thee, it is certain thou wilt be favoured with His blessing, that alone maketh rich and adds no sorrow with it. Without this everything the world can give is precarious, empty and unsatisfactory, and the mind that has His inward support smiles at the severest occurrences of life. . . . It's in consequence of hard labour and constant attention that this greatness of mind, this brave dependence upon God is attained. But then every inch of ground that we conquer in this invisible country is worth to us all the mines of Mexico and Peru, and the jewels of India. . . . Guard against the easy companionable spirit that leads thee from thy self, and loses thee among vanities and wrong satisfactions. Be strong and play the man. Let reason and a calm sense of what is right, alone determine thy friendships, compliances and pleasures; and never fear any odd consequences; for as Wisdom is honoured of her children, so she never fails to return that honour double on their heads. May the God whose creature thou art and whose eye is over thee for good, direct thy goings! May His good Spirit in thy heart gently lead thee into the love of all that is excellent and truly advantageous."[1]

This, I think, may be taken as a fairly typical example of Quaker thought in the eighteenth century. Perhaps to us it may seem self-centred and not breathing the spirit of service to the community, but, coming as it does from a period when religious life in England was at a very low ebb, it must rather be compared with contemporary utterances than with the broader ideals of the present day.

A standard work of the early eighteenth century is Daniel Defoe's *Complete English Tradesman*, and in it he sketches his ideal tradesman "when he is beginning to be called a rich

[1] *William Cookworthy*, p. 11.

man." "I'll take it for granted too," he writes, ". . . that he is deemed an honest, openhearted, generous, fairdealing Tradesman; that every one speaks well of him, loves to deal with him; and whether they get or lose by him, they are always pleased; that he treats the rich with good manners, and the poor with good language; and that in particular he is a punctual paymaster; that when he has made a bargain, whether he gets or loses by it, he always performs it, without murmuring or cavilling; that he takes no unjust advantage, does not lie upon the catch to supplant anybody, and scorns, in short, to do an ill thing, though he might gain by it; that his word is as sacred as his bond; that he never grinds the face of the poor, but pays for his work cheerfully and readily, and is content to let poor men live by him; that he scorns to mistake pass for payment, or to lie upon the catch to trepan his neighbour; in a word, that he is a fair downright honest man."[1]

All this would have fitted the character of the man who tried to live out his Quakerism in his business relations. But it is a mere outward description. Quakerism was a plant from which a long series of beautiful characters flowered because it was dependent on the Life Within which drew its strength from God Himself. Although there were many failures, numbers of Quaker men and women, guided by that Inner Light in which they believed, found in commercial and industrial pursuits a service for humanity whilst seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

[1] *Complete English Tradesman*, II. p. 143.

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